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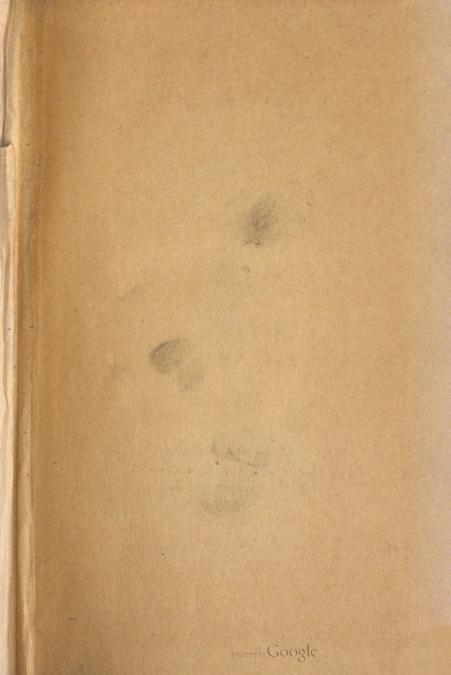
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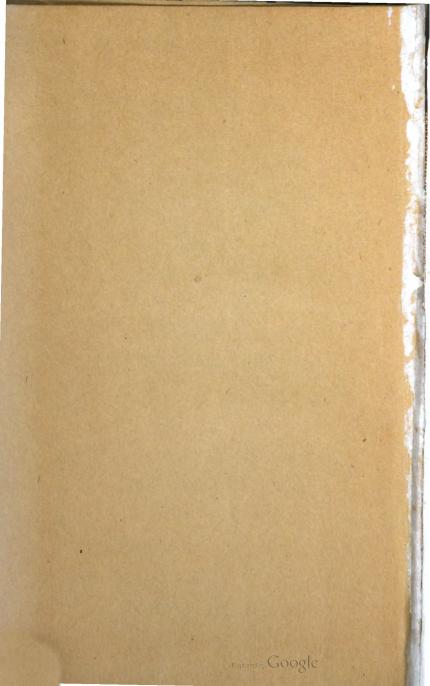
Richard Norton, Sara Norton, Rupert Norton Eliot Norton, Margaret Norton Elizabeth Gaskell Norton November 16, 1927



OF PROFESSOR NORTON'S BIRTH NOVEMBER 16, 1927, BY







# OUR VILLAGE:

## **SKETCHES**

OF

## RURAL CHARACTER AND SCENERY.

BY

## MARY RUSSELL MITFORD,

AUTHOR OF JULIAN, FOSCARI, AND DRAMATIC SCENES.

VOLUME V.

## LONDON:

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### INTRODUCTION.

FAREWELL TO OUR VILLAGE.

Was it the gentle Addison, as quoted by Johnson, or Johnson himself, that tender heart enclosed in a rough rind, who said that he could not part without sorrow from the stump of an old tree that he had known since he was a boy? Whoever said it, gave utterance to one of the deepest and most universal feelings of our common nature. The attractions of novelty are weak and powerless, in comparison with the minute but strong chains of habit, and the moment of separation is that of all others in which, with an amiable illusion, we brighten and magnify the good qualities of the object we leave, whilst we forget or overlook whatever at another time may have displeased us. The last tone is a tone of kindness; the last look a look of regret.

The very words consecrated to parting embody this sentiment: farewell! adieu! good-bye! Why they are benedictions, tender solemn benedictions! How poor

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and trivial when measured with their intensity, seem the ordinary phrases of meeting: good day! good morrow! how d'ye do? how are you \*? These are felt at once to be mere formal ceremonials, sentences of custom, spoken bows and curtseys, as cold and as unmeaning as the compliments at the beginning of a note or the humble servant at the end of a letter. Even between the most assured friends, there is the same remarkable distinction in manner and in word. We shake hands at meeting, at parting we embrace.

The poets, faithful chroniclers of human feeling, have not failed to resort frequently to a source of sympathy so general and so true: witness the parting of Hector and Andromache in the "tale of Troy divine;" and many of the finest passages in the finest writers, from Homer to Walter Scott. Nay, the feeling itself has made poets, as in the case of Mary, queen of Scots, whose beautiful verses, "adieu plaisant pays de France!" may be reckoned amongst the tenderest adieux in any language. Perhaps, at no instant of her most unhappy life did that unfortunate Beauty experience a keener sensation of grief than when sighing forth that farewell! I doubt, indeed, if farewell can be spoken without some sensation of sorrow.

Nevertheless, it is a word that must in the course of

• Mr. Spenser's little poem, "One day Good-bye met How d'ye do?" is a pretty illustration of this difference.

events, find utterance from us all; and just now it falls to my lot to bid a late and lingering good-bye to the snug nook called Our Village. The word must be spoken. For ten long years, for five tedious volumes, has that most multifarious, and most kind personage, the public, endured to hear the history, half real, and half imaginary, of a half imaginary and half real little spot on the sunny side of Berkshire; but all mortal things have an end, and so must my country stories. The longest tragedy has only five acts; and since the days of Clarissa Harlowe, no author has dreamt of spinning out one single subject through ten weary years. I blush to think how much I have encroached on an indulgence, so patient and so kind. Sorry as I am to part from a locality, which has become almost identified with myself, this volume must and shall be the last.

Farewell, then, my beloved village! the long straggling street, gay and bright in this sunny windy April morning, full of all implements of dirt and noise, men, women, children, cows, horses, waggons, carts, pigs, dogs, geese, and chickens, busy, merry, stirring little world, farewell! Farewell to the winding up-hill road, with its clouds of dust, as horsemen and carriages ascend the gentle eminence, its borders of turf, and its primrosy hedgerows!—Farewell to the breezy common, with its islands of cottages and cottage-gardens; its oaken avenues populous with rooks; its clear waters fringed with

gorse, where lambs are straying; its cricket-ground where children already linger, anticipating their summer revelry; its pretty boundary of field and woodland, and distant farms; and latest and best of its ornaments, the dear and pleasant mansion where dwell the neighbours of neighbours, the friends of friends; farewell to ye all! Ye will easily dispense with me, but what I shall do without you, I cannot imagine. Mine own dear village, farewell!

MARY RUSSELL MITFORD.

THREE-MILE CROSS, April 9, 1832.

#### THE INCENDIARY.

#### A COUNTRY TALE.

No one that had the misfortune to reside during the last winter in the disturbed districts of the south of England, will ever forget the awful impression of that terrible time. The stilly gatherings of the misguided peasantry amongst the wild hills, partly heath and partly woodland, of which so much of the northern part of Hampshire is composed,-dropping in one by one, and two by two, in the gloom of evening, or the dim twilight of a November morning; or the open and noisy meetings of determined men at noontide in the streets and greens of our Berkshire villages, and even sometimes in the very churchyards, sallying forth in small but resolute numbers to collect money or destroy machinery, and compelling or persuading their fellow-labourers to join them at every farm they visited; or the sudden appearance and disappearance of these large bodies, who sometimes remained together to the amount of several hundreds for

many days, and sometimes dispersed, one scarcely knew how, in a few hours; their day-light marches on the high road, regular and orderly as those of an army, or their midnight visits to lonely houses, lawless and terrific as the descent of pirates, or the incursions of banditti;—all brought close to us a state of things which we never thought to have witnessed in peaceful and happy England. In the sister island, indeed, we had read of such horrors, but now they were brought home to our very household hearths; we tasted of fear, the bitterest cup that an imaginative woman can taste, in all its agonizing varieties; and felt, by sad experience, the tremendous difference between that distant report of danger, with which we had so often fancied that we sympathised, and the actual presence of danger itself. Such events are salutary, inasmuch as they show to the human heart its own desperate self-deceit. I could not but smile at the many pretty letters of condolence and fellow-feeling which I received from writers who wrote far too well to feel any thing, who most evidently felt nothing; but the smile was a melancholy one-for I recollected how often, not intending to feign, or suspecting that I was feigning, I myself had written such.

Nor were the preparations for defence, however necessary, less shocking than the apprehensions of attack. The hourly visits of bustling parish officers, bristling with importance (for our village, though in the centre of

the insurgents, continued uncontaminated—" faithful amidst the unfaithful found,"-and was, therefore, quite a rallying point for loyal men and true;) the swearing in of whole regiments of petty constables; the stationary watchmen, who every hour, to prove their vigilance, sent in some poor wretch, beggar or match-seller, or rambling child, under the denomination of suspicious persons; the mounted patrol, whose deep "all's well," which ought to have been consolatory, was about the most alarming of all alarming sounds; the soldiers, transported from place to place in carts the better to catch the rogues, whose local knowledge gave them great advantage in a dispersal; the grave processions of magistrates and gentlemen on horseback: and, above all, the nightly collecting of arms and armed men within our own dwelling, kept up a continual sense of nervous inquietude.

Fearful, however, as were the realities, the rumours were a hundred-fold more alarming. Not an hour passed but, from some quarter or other, reports came pouring in of mobs gathering, mobs assembled, mobs marching upon us. Now the high roads were blockaded by the rioters, travellers murdered, soldiers defeated, and the magistrates, who had gone out to meet and harangue them, themselves surrounded and taken by the desperate multitude. Now the artizans—the commons, so to say, of B.— had risen to join the peasantry, driving out the

gentry and tradespeople, while they took possession of their houses and property, and only detaining the mayor and aldermen as hostages. Now that illustrious town held loyal, but was besieged. Now the mob had carried the place; and artizans, constables, tradespeople, soldiers, and magistrates, the mayor and corporation included, were murdered to a man, to say nothing of women and children; the market-place running with blood, and the town hall piled with dead bodies. This last rumour, which was much to the taste of our villagers, actually prevailed for several hours, terrified maid-servants ran shrieking about the house, and every corner of the village street realized Shakspeare's picture of "a smith swallowing a tailor's news."

So passed the short winter's day. With the approach of night came fresh sorrows; the red glow of fires gleaming on the horizon, and mounting into the middle sky; the tolling of bells; and the rumbling sound of the engines clattering along from place to place, and often, too often, rendered useless by the cutting of the pipes after they had begun to play—a dreadful aggravation of the calamity, since it proved that among those who assembled, professedly to help, were to be found favourers and abettors of the concealed incendiaries. Oh the horror of those fires—breaking forth night after night, sudden, yet expected, always seeming nearer than they actually were, and always said to have been more mis-

chievous to life and property than they actually had been! Mischievous enough they were, Heaven knows! A terrible and unholy abuse of the most beautiful and comfortable of the elements!—a sinful destruction of the bounties of Providence!—an awful crime against God and man! Shocking it was to behold the peasantry of England becoming familiarised with this tremendous power of evil—this desperate, yet most cowardly sin!

The blow seemed to fall, too, just where it might least have been looked for,—on the unoffending, the charitable, the kind; on those who were known only as the labourer's friends; to impoverish whom was to take succour, assistance, and protection from the poor. One of the objects of attack in our own immediate neighbourhood was a widow lady, between eighty and ninety; the best of the good, the kindest of the kind. Occurrences like this were in every way dreadful. They made us fear (and such fear is a revengeful passion, and comes near to hate) the larger half of our species. They weakened our faith in human nature.

The revulsion was, however, close at hand. A time came which changed the current of our feelings—a time of retribution. The fires were quenched; the riots were put down; the chief of the rioters were taken. Examination and commitment were the order of the day; the crowded gaols groaned with their overload of wretched prisoners; soldiers were posted at every avenue to guard

against possible escape; and every door was watched night and day by miserable women, the wives, mothers, or daughters of the culprits, praying for admission to their unfortunate relatives. The danger was fairly over, and pity had succeeded to fear.

Then, above all, came the special commission: the judges in threefold dignity; the array of counsel; the crowded court; the solemn trial; the awful sentence;—all the more impressive, from the merciful feeling which pervaded the government, the counsel, and the court. My father, a very old magistrate, being chairman of the bench, as well as one of the grand jury; and the then high sheriff, with whom it is every way an honour to claim acquaintance, being his intimate friend; I saw and knew more of the proceedings of this stirring time than usually falls to the lot of women, and took a deep interest in proceedings which had in them a thrilling excitement, as far beyond acted tragedy as truth is beyond fiction.

I shall never forget the hushed silence of the auditors, a dense mass of human bodies, the heads only visible, ranged tier over tier to the very ceiling of the lofty hall; the rare and striking importance which that silence and the awfulness of the occasion gave to the mere official forms of a court of justice, generally so hastily slurred over and slightly attended to; the unusual seriousness of the counsel; the watchful gravity of the judges; and,

more than all, the appearance of the prisoners themselves, belonging mostly to the younger classes of the peasantry, such men as one is accustomed to see in the fields, on the road or the cricket-ground, with sunburnt faces, and a total absence of reflection or care, but who now, under the influence of a keen and bitter anxiety, had acquired not only the sallow paleness proper to a prison, but the look of suffering and of thought, the brows contracted and brought low over the eyes, the general sharpness of feature and elongation of countenance, which give an expression of intellect, a certain momentary elevation, even to the commonest and most vacant of human faces. Such is the power of an absorbing passion, a great and engrossing grief. One man only amongst the large number whom I heard arraigned (for they were brought out by tens and by twenties) would, perhaps, under other circumstances, have been accounted handsome; yet a painter would at that moment have found studies in many.

I shall never forget, either, the impression made on my mind by one of the witnesses. Several men had been arraigned together for machine breaking. All but one of them had employed counsel for their defence, and under their direction had called witnesses to character, the most respectable whom they could find—the clergy and overseers of their respective parishes, for example, —masters with whom they had lived, neighbouring far-

mers or gentry, or even magistrates,-all that they could muster to grace or credit their cause. One poor man alone had retained no counsel, offered no defence, called no witness, though the evidence against him was by no means so strong as that against his fellow-prisoners; and it was clear that his was exactly the case in which testimony to character would be of much avail. The defences had ended, and the judge was beginning to sum up. when suddenly a tall gaunt upright figure, with a calm thoughtful brow, and a determined but most respectful demeanour, appeared in the witnesses' box. He was drest in a smock frock, and was clean and respectable in appearance, but evidently poor. The judge interrupted himself in his charge to enquire the man's business; and hearing that he was a voluntary witness for the undefended prisoner, proceeded to question him, when the following dialogue took place. The witness's replies, which seemed to me then, and still do so, very striking from their directness and manliness, were delivered with the same humble boldness of tone and manner that characterized the words.

Judge. "You are a witness for the prisoner, an unsummoned witness?"

"I am, my lord. I heard that he was to be tried today, and have walked twenty miles to speak the truth of him, as one poor man may do of another."

"What is your situation in life?"



- "A labourer, my lord; nothing but a day-labourer."
- " How long have you known the prisoner?"
- "As long as I have known any thing. We were playmates together, went to the same school, have lived in the same parish. I have known him all my life."
  - "And what character has he borne?"
- "As good a character, my lord, as a man need work under."

It is pleasant to add, that this poor man's humble testimony was read from the judge's notes, and mentioned in the judge's charge, with full as much respect, perhaps a little more, than the evidence of clergymen and magistrates for the rest of the accused; and that principally from this direct and simple tribute to his character, the prisoner in question was acquitted.

This anecdote speaks strongly for the misled part of the labourers—by very far the larger part. The fact that follows makes against their deluders. It came before the grand jury; but owing to the merciful plan of the counsel for the crown of trying only for the minor offence of machine-breaking, instead of the capital one of collecting money, was not brought into court, and, of course, escaped the newspapers. A large party of rioters, some two or three hundred, met a clergyman riding at some distance from his own house. They surrounded his horse, caused him to dismount, and made their usual demand of five pounds. The clergyman offered them his purse, containing some silver, declaring he had no more money about him.

"Pshaw!" answered the ringleader, "don't think to put us off

ŗ.

To return, however, from my evil habit of digressing (if I may use an Irish phrase) before I begin, and making my introduction longer than my story, a simple sin to which in many instances, and especially in this, I am fain to plead guilty;—to come back to my title and my subject,-I must inform my courteous readers, that the case of arson, which attracted most attention, and excited most interest in this part of the country, was the conflagration of certain ricks, barns, and farm buildings, in the occupation of Richard Mayne; and that, not so much from the value of the property consumed (though that value was considerable), as on account of the character and situation of the prisoner, whom, after a long examination, the magistrates found themselves compelled to commit for the offence. I did not hear this trial, the affair having occurred in the neighbouring county; and do not, therefore, vouch for "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth," as one does

with beggarly sixpences! Here's a bit of paper and an inkhorn; write us a draft for the sum on the N. bank. Stop," added he, as the prisoner was perforce preparing to obey him; "stop! you seem to be out of cash; so if you had rather write an order for ten pounds, do; it may save you trouble, and I'll hand you the balance here on the spot."

Of course the accommodation was not accepted; but this was a cool way of transacting business, and affords one proof, amongst many, that the leaders in this affair could not have been common labourers. when an ear-witness; but the general outline of the story will suffice for our purpose.

Richard Mayne was a wealthy yeoman of the old school, sturdy, boisterous, bold, and kind, always generous, and generally good-natured, but cross-grained and obstinate by fits, and sometimes purse-proud—after the fashion of men who have made money by their own industry and shrewdness. He had married late in life, and above him in station, and had now been for two or three years a widower with one only daughter, a girl of nineteen, of whom he was almost as fond as of his grey-hound Mayfly, and for pretty much the same reason—that both were beautiful and gentle, and his own, and both admired and coveted by others—that Mayfly had won three cups, and that Lucy had refused four offers.

A sweet and graceful creature was Lucy Mayne. Her mother, a refined and cultivated woman, the daughter of an unbeneficed clergyman, had communicated, perhaps unconsciously, much of her own taste to her daughter. It is true, that most young ladies, even of her own station, would have looked with great contempt on Lucy's acquirements, who neither played nor drew, and was wholly, in the phrase of the day, unaccomplished; but then she read Shakspeare and Milton, and the poets and prose writers of the James's and Charles's times, with a perception and relish of their beauty very uncommon in a damsel under twenty; and when her father boasted of

his Lucy as the cleverest as well as the prettiest lass within ten miles, he was not so far wrong as many of his hearers were apt to think him.

After all, the person to whom Lucy's education owed most, was a relation of her mother's, a poor relation, who, being left a widow with two children almost totally destitute, was permitted by Richard Mayne to occupy one end of a small farm-house, about a mile from the old substantial manorial residence, which he himself inhabited, whilst he farmed the land belonging to both. Nothing could exceed his kindness to the widow and her family; and Mrs. Owen, a delicate and broken-spirited woman, who had known better days, and was now left with a sickly daughter and a promising son dependent on the precarious charity of relatives and friends, found in the free-handed and open-hearted farmer and his charming little girl her only comfort. He even restored to her the blessing of her son's society, who had hitherto earned his living by writing for an attorney in the neighbouring town, but whom her wealthy kinsman now brought home to her, and established as the present assistant and future successor of the master of a well-endowed grammar-school in the parish, farmer Mayne being one of the trustees, and all-powerful with the other functionaries joined in the trust, and the then schoolmaster in so wretched a state of health as almost to ensure a speedy vacancy.

In most instances, such an exertion of an assumed rather than a legitimate authority, would have occasioned no small prejudice against the party protected; but Philip Owen was not to be made unpopular, even by the unpopularity of his patron. Gentle, amiable, true, and kind,-kind both in word and deed,-it was found absolutely impossible to dislike him. He was clever, too, very clever, with a remarkable aptitude for teaching, as both parents and boys soon found to their mutual satisfaction; for the progress of one half-year of his instruction equalled that made in a twelvemonth under the old regime. He must also, one should think, have been fond of teaching, for after a hard day's fagging at Latin and English, and writing and accounts, and all the drudgery of a boys' school, he would make a circuit of a mile and a half home in order to give Lucy Mayne a lesson in French or Italian. For a certainty, Philip Owen must have had a strong natural turn for playing the pedagogue, or he never would have gone so far out of his way just to read Fenelon and Alfieri with Lucy Mayne.

So for two happy years matters continued. At the expiration of that time, just as the old schoolmaster, who declared that nothing but Philip's attention had kept him alive so long, was evidently on his death-bed, farmer Mayne suddenly turned Mrs. Owen, her son, and her

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sick daughter out of the house, which by his permission they had hitherto occupied; and declared publicly, that whilst he held an acre of land in the parish, Philip Owen should never be elected master of the grammar-school—a threat which there was no doubt of his being able to carry into effect. The young man, however, stood his ground; and sending off his mother and sister to an uncle in Wales, who had lately written kindly to them, hired a room at a cottage in the village, determined to try the event of an election, which the languishing state of the incumbent rendered inevitable.

The cause of farmer Mayne's inveterate dislike to one whom he had so warmly protected, and whose conduct, manners, and temper had procured him friends wherever he was known, nobody could assign with any certainty. Perhaps he had unwittingly trodden on Mayfly's foot, or had opposed some prejudice of her master's—but his general carefulness not to hurt any thing, or offend any body, rendered either of these conjectures equally improbable;—perhaps he had been found only too amiable by the farmer's other pet—those lessons in languages were dangerous things!—and when Lucy was seen at church with a pale face and red eyes, and when his landlord Squire Hawkins's blood hunter was seen every day at farmer Mayne's door, it became currently reported and confidently believed, that the cause of the

quarrel was a love affair between the cousins, which the farmer was determined to break off, in order to bestow his daughter on the young lord of the manor.

Affairs had been in this posture for about a fortnight, and the old schoolmaster was just dead, when a fire broke out in the rick-yard of Farley Court, and Philip Owen was apprehended and committed as the incendiary! The astonishment of the neighbourhood was excessive; the rector and half the farmers of the place offered to become bail; but the offence was not bailable; and the only consolation left for the friends of the unhappy young man, was the knowledge that the trial would speedily come on, and their internal conviction that an acquittal was certain.

As time wore on, however, their confidence diminished. The evidence against him was terribly strong. He had been observed lurking about the rick-yard with a lantern, in which a light was burning, by a lad in the employ of farmer Mayne, who had gone thither for hay to fodder his cattle about an hour before the fire broke out. At eleven o'clock the hay-stack was on fire, and at ten Robert Doyle had mentioned to James White, another boy in farmer Mayne's service, that he had seen Mr. Philip Owen behind the great rick. Farmer Mayne himself had met him at half-past ten (as he was returning from B. market) in the lane leading from the rick-yard towards the village, and had observed him throw

something he held in his hand into the ditch. phry Harris, a constable employed to seek for evidence, had found the next morning a lantern, answering to that described by Robert Doyle, in the part of the ditch indicated by farmer Mayne, which Thomas Brown, the village shopkeeper, in whose house Owen slept, identified as having lent to his lodger in the early part of the evening. A silver pencil, given to Owen by the mother of one of his pupils, and bearing his full name on the seal at the end, was found close to where the fire was discovered; and to crown all, the curate of the village, with whom the young man's talents and character had rendered him a deserved favourite, had unwillingly deposed that he had said "it might be in his power to take a great revenge on farmer Mayne," or words to that effect; whilst a letter was produced from the accused to the farmer himself, intimating that one day he would be sorry for the oppression which he had exercised towards him and his. These two last facts were much relied upon as evincing malice, and implying a purpose of revenge from the accused towards the prosecutor; yet there were many who thought that the previous circumstances might well account for them without reference to the present occurrence, and that the conflagration of the ricks and farm-buildings might, under the spirit of the time, (for fires were raging every night in the surrounding villages,) be merely a remarkable coincidence. The young man himself simply denied the fact of setting fire to any part of the property or premises; enquired earnestly whether any lives had been lost, and still more earnestly after the health of Miss Lucy; and on finding that she had been confined to her bed by fever and delirium, occasioned, as was supposed, by the fright, ever since that unhappy occurrence, relapsed into a gloomy silence, and seemed to feel no concern or interest in the issue of the trial.

His friends, nevertheless, took kind and zealous measures for his defence,—engaged counsel, sifted testimony, and used every possible means, in the assurance of his innocence, to trace out the true incendiary. Nothing, however, could be discovered to weaken the strong chain of circumstantial evidence, or to impeach the credit of the witnesses, who, with the exception of the farmer himself, seemed all friendly to the accused, and most distrest at being obliged to bear testimony against him. On the eve of the trial, the most zealous of his friends could find no ground of hope, except in the chances of the day; Lucy, for whom alone the prisoner asked, being still confined by severe illness.

The judges arrived, the whole terrible array of the special commission; the introductory ceremonies were gone through; the cause was called on, and the case proceeded with little or no deviation from the evidence already cited. When called upon for his defence, the

prisoner again asked if Lucy Mayne were in court? and hearing that she was ill in her father's house, declined entering into any defence whatsoever. Witnesses to character, however, pressed forward-his old master, the attorney, the rector and curate of the parish, half the farmers of the village, every body, in short, who ever had an opportunity of knowing him, even his reputed rival, Mr. Hawkins, who, speaking, he said, on the authority of one who knew him well, professed himself confident that he could not be guilty of a bad actiona piece of testimony that seemed to strike and affect the prisoner more than any thing that had passed; -evidence to character crowded into court; -- but all was of no avail against the strong chain of concurrent facts; and the judge was preparing to sum up, and the jury looking as if they had already condemned, when suddenly a piercing shriek was heard in the hall, and, pale, tottering, dishevelled, Lucy Mayne rushed into her father's arms, and cried out with a shrill despairing voice, that " she was the only guilty; that she had set fire to the rick; and that if they killed Philip Owen for her crime, they would be guilty of murder."

The general consternation may be imagined, especially that of the farmer, who had left his daughter almost insensible with illness, and still thought her lightheaded. Medical assistance, however, was immediately summoned, and it then appeared that what she said was

most true; that the lovers, for such they were, had been accustomed to deposit letters in one corner of that unlucky hay-rick; that having seen from her chamber window Philip Owen leaving the yard, she had flown with a taper in her hand to secure the expected letter, and, alarmed at her father's voice, had run away so hastily, that she had, as she now remembered, left the lighted taper amidst the hay; that then the fire came, and all was a blank to her, until, recovering that morning from the stupor succeeding to delirium, she had heard that Philip Owen was to be tried for his life from the effect of her carelessness, and had flown to save him she knew not how!

The sequel may be guessed: Philip was, of course, acquitted: every body, even the very judge, pleaded for the lovers; the young landlord and generous rival added his good word; and the schoolmaster of Farley and his pretty wife are at this moment one of the best and happiest couples in his majesty's dominions.

## CHILDREN OF THE VILLAGE.

#### THE FOSTER-MOTHER.

"PRAY how do you like your new schoolfellow, Sir Francis Vere?" said Mr. Stanley to his young son Charles, as they were sauntering rather than walking in the noble park which surrounds his fine old seat of Stanley Manor, on a bright April morning; "his grandmother speaks of him as a lad of high promise."

"Of high promise, does she, sir? Whew!" quoth master Charles, whistling to a large spaniel, and beating the sedges round a fine piece of water, by the edge of which they stood. "A lad of promise! Whew! Heigh, Dash! Heigh! One may be sure there are teal or wild ducks here by Dash's action. Heigh, Dash! Heigh!" continued master Stanley. "And so his grandmamma speaks of Vere as a lad of promise? Whew, Dash! There's a fine fellow!"

Now master Charles Stanley was a boy still under

eleven; but being clever, bold, and spirited, an old denizen of a public school, and encouraged to talk freely at home, he spoke with a decision and freedom not very usual at his age, thus exhibiting to his excellent father, and by exhibiting enabling him to correct, the rash judgments of inexperience, and the petulant decisions of a presumptuous though generous character. In the present instance, Mr. Stanley was a good deal amused by the manner in which his son had contrived to intimate his dissent from the opinion of the good old lady Vere, and when Charles repeated "a lad of high promise, indeed! Whew, Dash! Whew!" he replied at once to his insinuation, "And why not a boy of promise, Charles?"

"Because, sir, he's so much more like a girl. You never saw such a mincing, blushing, delicate personage as it is in all your life; afraid of getting wet in the feet lest he should catch cold, or of going without his hat lest he should spoil his complexion. He wraps half-adozen silk handkerchiefs about his neck because he is subject to sore throats; wears kid gloves at cricket for fear his hands should chap; and wraps up his feet in woollen socks because he once had a chilblain. A promising boy, indeed! Why, sir, his grandmother herself could not be a greater coddle in her own venerable person, than this precious sprig of the baronetage, Sir Francis Vere."

Mr. Stanley smiled, in spite of himself. "You'll

come to kid gloves some time or other, master Charles; for, as rough and red as those paws of yours are now, one may trust to the instinct of eighteen for that foppery. But eleven is rather early."

"Besides, sir," continued Charles, "he sports a dressing-box as large as my trunk, full of almond paste and violet soap, and eau de Cologne, and oil for the hair, and all manner of essences, so that one may smell him half a mile off; and his cambric handkerchief was tossed out of the school only last week by Dr. K., because it half poisoned him by stinking of otto of roses. I hope I shall never come to that, sir, even if I do turn out a coxcomb at eighteen."

"There is no telling, Charles," replied his father.

"I think you a very promising subject for any folly that may happen at that time to be the fashion. But this poor boy! What a life he must lead amongst you! And how entirely he owes his effeminacy to the accident of his being brought up amongst females!"

"I think not, sir, it is the nature of the creature. If you were to see him you would say so. All the grand-mothers in the world would never make a manly lad such a milk-sop." And Charles looked at himself as he stood struttingly flourishing a switch in one hand, and caressing Dash—who, dripping with mud from the bank, was splashing him most manfully from top to toe—with the other, he looked as if he would fain have said, "all

the grandmothers in the world would never have made a milk-sop of me."

Apparently Mr. Stanley read his son's thoughts. "Ah, Charles! you know little of the effect of education, of habit, of constant association. You yourself, if exposed to similar circumstances, would have been just as likely to turn out a missy young gentleman as this poor child, Sir Arthur Vere—his very title will make against him. But talking of the power of association, come and sit down on this bank, and let Dash return to his dear sport of beating for wild fowl, and be quiet, if you can, for five minutes, whilst I tell you a story."

Now master Charles did not very thoroughly relish this invitation. It seemed to him hardly manly to sit down for the purpose of listening to a story which, he suspected, was to be told to him for the sake of the moral; he obeyed, nevertheless, flumping himself down in the midst of a tuft of cowslips, whilst Dash, with equal comprehension and far more alacrity, returned to his search for the wild-duck's nest, the existence of which had become clear to his sagacity amongst the sedges and sallows on the water's edge.

"Nay, it is not much of a story either," said Mr. Stanley, when both were comfortably established on their soft and fragrant seat. "Not much that deserves the name of story, though a curious fact in natural his-

tory. Do you remember admiring Dr. Lyndsay's pretty little spaniel yesterday, and wondering at his name \*?"

- "Romulus? Yes, sir, I do not know which I admired most, the venerable master, with his fine upright person and keen bright eye, his white bushy wig and three-cornered hat, and clerical coat, walking so alertly and speaking so kindly, and yet with something stately about him too, or the pretty little delicate creature, so white and shining, that followed him—rather too much like a lady's pet to be sure—but the little dog and the master matched each other well, both seemed courtly and dignified, a sort of people whose company did one honour."
- Odd names in dogs are by no means uncommon. I saw a lady's lap-dog yesterday who was called Spes, and the little creature being a gentleman, there was no translating the name and calling it by the more euphonious appellation of Hope—for Hope is feminine, and feminine must be, as witness Collins's ode, Lawrence's picture, Miss Sedgwick's novel of Hope Leslie, and the thousand and one seals, where she flourishes leaning elegantly against her anchor. Of course we challenged his fair and charming mistress (for most fair and most charming she is) as to the donor of her pretty pet, since to give the name of Hope to the approved emblem of Fidelity, did look rather lover-like. But the little creature had been a present from her brother, and so called in compliance with his desire—a mere classical whim, containing no allusion whatsoever.

"The master's company would do honour to any court in Europe, Charles. You are right there. one of the most learned and eminent persons in England, and as remarkable for his high qualities as for his vast attainments. But it is with Romulus that we have to do at present. Romulus's mother belonged to your kind friend Colonel Bruce, the gay, gallant, handsome sportsman, whose manliness and gentlemanliness you admire so much. She was a beautiful little spaniel, of the Marlborough breed, excellent as a sporting dog, and a great pet with her master. She had just been confined with Romulus and another pup, and was very literally in the straw; when one fine morning, in September, Colonel Bruce sallied forth with his gun and his pointers, partridge shooting, little suspecting that his poor pet, whose attention had unluckily been caught by the gun and the leathern gaiters, had left her puppies to follow him to the field. The pointers were ranging the stubble, when Colonel Bruce heard a rustling in the hedgerow close by; he saw nothing, but taking for granted that it was a hare, fired, and killed his little favourite dead upon the spot."

"Oh, papa! Poor Colonel Bruce! What a sad accident! How shocked he must have been!"

"Shocked enough, Charles. Even now he says he can scarcely bear to think of it. The poor little creature, when he discovered her amongst the long grass

and reeds, uttered one faint moan, looked up in his face fondly and piteously, tried to lick his hand, then gave one shiver, stretched out her delicate feet, and died. She, however, was dead. But the puppies! What was to become of them? Only three days old, and smaller than rats!"

- "What did become of them, father?"
- "Why, luckily, Mrs. Bruce had a favourite cat, whose kittens had just been taken from her. The pups were put to pussy, who took to them as if they had been her own offspring, and brought them up with all imaginable care and success."
- "Well, sir, now I find the reason of the name.—Well?"
- "Romulus you have seen. He is rather smaller, perhaps, than he might have been if nursed by his own mother, but that, in a Marlborough spaniel, is a merit; and Remus (for so, of course, the brother twin was called) is smaller still. Their foster-mother did them all possible justice; and was fonder of them, and nourished them longer than she had ever been known to do by her own kittens. But the extraordinary part of the story is, that with the cat's milk these little doglings imbibed also the cat's habits; would sit and wash their faces with their paws, were excellent mousers, and would watch a rat-hole for an hour."
  - "Oh, papa!"

- "Fact, I assure you, Charles. The celebrated cat, who was turned into a lady at the prayer of her master, never caught a mouse in better style than Romulus, who, moreover, would no more wet his feet than his purring foster-mother, or Sir Arthur Vere."
  - "Oh, father!"
- "It's the simple truth, I assure you, Charles; and proceeds, in both instances, from the same cause, example and education; and the self-same story, which throws some light on the origin of that poor boy's effeminacy, may also afford good hope of his reformation; for whilst Romulus, under the tender care of Dr. Lyndsay, which (no offence to him) may in this instance be compared to the tutelage of Lady Vere, continues to pursue and practise all his cattish propensities and habits. Remus turned into Colonel Bruce's kennel, which (no offence to that repository of doggish learning) may be not unaptly likened to the riotous seminary, yelept a public school, has recovered all his canine hardihood and accomplishments, is famous in covert and hedgerow, as good a water dog as Dash himself, and as little likely to notice a mouse, or wash his face with his paws, as that sagacious quadruped. And now, Charles, may we not have hopes of Sir Arthur?"

And Charles assented—and so it proved. Before two years had elapsed, young Vere, stimulated by ridicule, had flung aside his kid gloves, his woollen socks, his perfumery, and his foppery, had overcome his horror of wet feet and chapped hands, and had become the best rower, and the second best cricketer of his form.

N.B.—The canine part of my little story is literally true. Romulus is still living, and the property of no less a person than the venerable P——, of M—— College, the learned and excellent Dr. R——.

## CHRISTMAS AMUSEMENTS.

(No. I.)

Two or three years ago I went to pay a Christmas visit, about sixty miles off, to a family of old friends who were recently arrived from a long continental tour; and, after passing the season in London, had left it late in the summer for a fine old gothic place, somewhat out of repair, which they rented from the guardians of the young nobleman, an infant in arms, to whom, on the death of a distant kinsman, the title and estates had devolved.

Haddonleigh Hall was, as I have said, a fine specimen of the mixed species of architecture, singularly picturesque and imposing, which prevailed in the time of Elizabeth and James the First. Vast as it was, it comprised only a part of the original design of the "high and mighty prince, our well-beloved cousin," one of the wealthy favorites of the time, for whose habitation it had been constructed; as might be seen by a large drawing something between a map and an architectural elevation,

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which hung over the chimney-piece in the great library, and was entitled "Haddonleigh Hall in its glory," although the erection had never proceeded farther than the present mansion house, a magnificent old seat with its marble halls, its oaken staircases, its long galleries, its spacious chapel and armoury, its terraced gardens, its noble avenues, and the wild forest-like demesne, rather a chase than a park, by which the stately building was surrounded.

Out of repair it certainly was, and scantily furnished, according to modern notions, for the greater part of the moveables were coeval with the mansion; but the present occupant, a man of fine taste, and something of an antiquarian, liked it all the better on that account; and adding the sofas, screens, and ottomans, necessary to comfort, persisted in refusing to remove the carved, high-backed, ebony chairs, and massive tables, which harmonised so well with the pannelled walls and ceilings and the rich gothic windows. What had chiefly tempted him, however, to become its inhabitant, was certainly the contents of the old library, a collection of ancient and curious volumes, which, though somewhat tattered and fusty, contained, as he declared, more scarce tracts and rare editions than he had ever seen in a similar number of books. So enchanted was he with the discovery of this treasure, that he had summoned a brother bibliomaniac, also a man of large fortune, to partake of this

great mental feast, and assist him in drawing up a catalogue raisonnée of the collection. It was even rumoured that they were in treaty for the purchase, though this was too important a negociation to be talked of publicly.

Mr. Wilkins, such was the name of my worthy host, was a Welchman, of extensive property, and ancient family; and was not a little proud of his Cambrian descent, although too fond of literary and antiquarian pursuits to bury himself in the Principality. His lady had been a beauty, and was still a fine woman, and the very essence of good-nature. In other respects, she was by no means remarkable: indeed, being of very sedentary habits (she seldom moved from the corner of the sofa), very gentle voice, and very few words, we were but too apt to forget that she was in company. The young people. five in number, whom I had not seen for many years, pleased and interested me exceedingly. Tom and Charles were two fine lads, from Oxford, thorough sportsmen; and Tom, in particular, very lively and intelligent. their sisters, Charlotte, the eldest, was a tall, fair young woman, beautiful, gentle, and simple, as her mother, whom she strongly resembled both in mind and person. Sophy was a pretty brunette, with something of her father's talent, directed, of course, to different pursuits; and Anne, the youngest, was a charming wild creature of sixteen or seventeen, not yet come out, though emancipated from the school-room and the governess, and left

to run wild about the house, the general pet and plaything of the family.

Trees and children are, of all living things, those whose growth soonest makes one feel one's age: children especially. To sit under the shade of a pine of one's own planting, is nothing to being overtopped by a girl whom one used to dandle in one's arms, and fondle on one's knee. How short a time ago it seemed to me since Annie, Nannie, Nanette, (for by all those names the little lassie was wont and still continued to be called), a damsel of some four years old, used to climb into my lap, and throw her arms round my neck, and beg for a story. And here she was a young woman, the gayest of the gay, the wildest of the wild! Now riding races with one brother, now skaiting with another; now clambering the walls to peep into an inaccessible tower; now trying to lift the lid of the unopenable chest, in which, according to the story always told of all old houses in all countries, a bride hid in sport on her wedding day, and was never found again until she had become a skeleton; now peering into a secret passage; now diving into a subterraneous vault; now attiring herself in a suit of armour; now chasing an undiscoverable and non-existent ghost: always the merriest, kindest, happiest of all human beings! Annie was far less beautiful than Charlotte, and less talented and accomplished than Sophia; but there is a certain word called charming, with which beauty has little to do, and talents and accomplishments still less: and charming Annie was to the full extent of that charming word.

I had expected that they would be full of balls and gaiety, and country parties, their neighbourhood being, though more stately and less populous than our's, well supplied with families equal in fortune and respectability to Mr. Wilkins himself; but I was agreeably disappointed, by finding them quite free from country engagements; and except my fellow guest, the bibliomaniac, the grave, abstracted Mr. Mortimer, a plain man of forty, with a splendid scholastic reputation, most literally a family party. It was clear that they visited none of their neighbours, and I could not help enquiring of Sophy "what could be the reason?"

"The reason," replied Miss Sophia, "is, that none of our neighbours have visited us. At first we were exceedingly puzzled at not being called upon, having taken all due means of announcing our arrival, by going out in the carriage almost every day, showing ourselves nicely dressed at church, and subscribing to the balls and the circulating library in the next town; whilst papa entered his name at a reading-room and billiard-club, and Tom and Charles became members of the hunt. We even went to milliners' shops where we wanted nothing, took Annie to a dancing-school, and

talked to the governesses, and at the mammas, hugged an ugly little baby belonging to our next neighbour, sent for the apothecary, and invited the curate; so weary were we of our own company, so willing to be sociable. Still, however, nobody came; we were shunned like a pestilence; nobody curtsied to us at church; nobody spoke to us at the milliners'; nobody danced with us at the balls; the very nursery-maids seemed shy of trusting us with their babies; and we relinquished our attempts at forming new acquaintance in despair. At last the apothecary let us into the secret. There were two causes for our being taboo, as they say in Otaheite. First of all, this old house of ours has a bad reputation. I don't mean because it is said to be haunted; for ghosts are generally considered as remarkably genteel and respectable persons, people of family and character; but because it has belonged, for the last fifty years, to a series of bachelor lords, whose female companions have been thoroughly unvisitable, and have really left a bad odour about the mansion. This was one reason; the other was in ourselves, or rather, in our name."

- " Your name!"
- "Yes, or rather in the last syllable; the unlucky termination in *kins*. The folks hereabouts are rather more tenacious about family and station than is common in England; and a neighbouring place, Kinlay Park, having been let in succession to a Mr. Tomkins, who

turned out to be a hosier; a Mr. Simkins, from Mark Lane; and a Mr. Hoskins, from Billingsgate, they have forsworn all intercourse with so plebeian a syllable, even although the three first letters be of some gentility. They will find us out in time," pursued Sophy, with great good-humour; "and then how they will stare at papa's long pedigree. In the meanwhile, we do very well as we are."

And very well we did; especially in the mornings when reading, writing, drawing, working, driving, riding, and walking, besides all sorts of out-of-door sports for the young men, and battledore and shuttlecock for Annie, passed away the day-light hours rapidly and merrily; but in the evening I sometimes thought the young people would have been glad of a little variety. At this time Mr. Wilkins and Mr. Mortimer usually joined us, the former going to sleep, and the latter sitting, for the most part, in complacent silence; Mrs. Wilkins and her lap-dog sate in equal silence on the sofa, and the young folks, too brother and sisterish for dancing, and too old for forfeits or blindman's buff, tried music, tried billiards, tried chess; and after being thoroughly weary of them all, threatened to get up some tableaux, only tableaux wanted spectators; and talked of acting a play, which, besides the usual difficulties as to cast, involved, even more than the tableaux, the want of an audience. At length some one reverted to the

French charades, which they used to perform abroad, and the suggestion was hailed with universal approbation, the scene chosen, and an early evening fixed for the experiment; the result of which shall, in due time, be communicated to the courteous reader.

Note.-My description of Haddonleigh Hall bears so strong a resemblance to Bramshill, the beautiful residence of Sir John Cope, that it is necessary to inform the courteous reader, that they are in reality two places, and that the proprietors and inhabitants of the one are entirely unconnected with the proprietor, who is also the inhabitant of the other. Perhaps, as I have mentioned Bramshill, I may be permitted to transcribe part of a hasty epistle, written by me two or three years since, to a dear young friend (a simpleton only in keeping my letters), and which contains an account of a visit of mine to that magnificent place, celebrated not only for its own antiquity and grandeur, but for its being the residence of a fox-hunter, whose hounds are noted for their excellence and beauty, and the scene of many famous cricket-matches, a part of the park being devoted to that noble sport, of which Sir John, a country gentleman of the old school, full of heartiness and hospitality, is a most determined patron.

My correspondent being in London, my epistle began, like most feminine letters to the great city, with a farrago of commissions the most troublesome, and chitchat the most trifling, and messages the most confused, mixed with questions \* of all sorts, about theatres, and actors, and singers, and authors, and pictures, and books, and then went on as follows, for I shall not change one word.

"Now, my dearest, I am going to tell you of an exploit of mine, which I longed for you extremely to share. Last Saturday I dined at the house of a friend in the neighbourhood, and was reproached by another friend, a spirited young fox-hunter, with never having gone to see the hounds throw off. I said that I should greatly enjoy the sight, and would certainly go some day or other; the lady of the house replied, that she would drive me; the conversation then turned to other subjects, and I never expected to hear more of the scheme.

"The next day, however, Sir John calling on my fair friend, the plan was mentioned and settled, and the young gentleman who had originally suggested the expedition, rode over to let me know that at half-past nine the next day, Mrs. S. would call for me.

- "At half-past nine, accordingly, she arrived, in a
- \* I am rather renowned for making an over-free use of the note of interrogation. One of my correspondents, a gentleman by the way, is saucy enough to say, that I once sent him fifteen questions in five lines. To think of his counting them!

small limber poney-carriage, drawn by a high-blooded little Arabian, on whom she herself (the daughter and sister of a whole race of fox-hunters) had been accustomed to hunt in Wiltshire, and attended by her husband's hunting-groom, excellently mounted. The weather was all that could be desired; one of those vapoury misty autumnal mornings, that break into so bright a noon; I was delighted with the project, and with my charming companion, a most lovely and intelligent woman; she on her part was pleased to be the cause of so much pleasure, and off we set in the highest possible spirits.

"It was the first day of the season; the fixture (are you sportswoman enough, Emily, to understand that technical phrase?) the fixture was in Bramshill Park, and it was expected to be the most numerous field of many years, Mr. Warde—pshaw! he is too eminent a man to be mistered! John Warde, the celebrated fox-hunter, the very Nestor of the chase, who, after keeping fox-hounds for fifty-seven years, has, just at seventy-nine, found himself beginning to grow old, and given up his pack, being on a visit at the house, and all the hunt likely to assemble to see this most agreeable person. Very well worth seeing he is, I assure you, certainly one of the pleasantest men that it has ever been my fortune to foregather with, full of anecdote, and as

beautiful as my own father, in a similar style, just such a specimen of bright, vigorous, blooming, healthful, cheerful old age.

"Well, off we set; got to Bramshill just as breakfast was over; saw the hounds brought out in front of the house to be admired; drove to covert; saw the finding of the fox; heard the first grand burst at his going off; followed him to another covert; and the scent being bad, and the field so numerous, that he was constantly headed back, both he, who finally ran to earth, and another fox found subsequently, kept dodging about from thicket to thicket, in that magnificent demesne, (the very perfection of park scenery, hill and dale, and wood and water); and for above four hours we, with our spirited little steed, kept up with the chase, driving over road and no road, across drains, and through gaps; often run away with, sometimes almost tossed out, but with a degree of delight and enjoyment, such as I never felt before, and never, I verily believe, shall feel again.

"The field (above a hundred horsemen, most of them known to my fair companion,) were much pleased with our sportsmanship, which in me (much as I have always as an author cherished country sports) was in my own person unexpected. They showed us the kindest attention, brought me the brush, which I have hung up in my green-house; and when at three o'clock, we and Mr. Warde, and two or three others, went in to

luncheon, whilst the hounds proceeded to Eversley, I really do not think that there was a gentleman present who was not good-naturedly gratified by our gratification.

"Unless you have seen a pack of hounds throw off, you can hardly imagine the animation, or the beauty of the scene. The horses are most beautiful, and the dogs, although not pretty separately, are so when collected, and in their own proper scenery, which is exactly the case with the scarlet coats of the fox-hunters. seen nothing of the park before, beyond the cricketground, and never could have had such a guide to its inmost recesses, the very heart of its sylvan solitudes, as the fox. The house, a superb gothic structure, built by the last lord Zouch, and kept in proud repair by the present hospitable possessor, is placed on so commanding an eminence, that it seemed meeting us in every direction, and harmonized completely with the old English feeling of the park and the sport. You must see Bramshill. It is like nothing hereabouts, but reminds me of the grand old mansions in the north of England. Prince Henry (the eldest son of James the First) is said to have resided here; whilst Inigo Jones contributed to adorn its terraces, and his great enemy, Ben Jonson, projected masques in its courts. It was in this park also, that archbishop Abbot accidentally shot a keeper who bled to death within the hour.

"In short, the place is full of histories. It has a haunted room; a chapel shut up, and full of armour; a chest, where, as they say, a bride hid on her wedding-day, and the spring-lock closing, was lost, and perished, and never found until years and years had passed; (this story, by the way, is common to old buildings; it used to be told of the great house at Malsanger;) it swarms with family-pictures, has a hall with the dais, much fine tapestry, and is wanting in no point of antique dignity; the library is full of old books, the furniture as true to the ancient fashion as is compatible with modern notions of comfort; and I cannot conceive a more perfect specimen of a great nobleman's residence in the seventeenth century than the splendid mansion of Bramshill. You must come back to us, Emily, if only to see the hounds throw off in the Park."

## THE RAT-CATCHER.

A SKETCH.

Beautifully situated on a steep knoll, overhanging a sharp angle in the turnpike road, which leads through our village of Aberleigh, stands a fantastic rustic building, with a large yew-tree on one side, a superb weeping ash hanging over it on the other, a clump of elms forming a noble back-ground behind, and all the prettinesses of porches garlanded with clematis, windows mantled with jessamine, and chimneys wreathed with luxuriant ivy, adding grace to the picture. To form a picture, most assuredly, it was originally built,— a point of view, as it is called, from Allonby Park, to which the bye-road that winds round this inland cape, or headland, directly leads; and most probably it was also copied from some book of tasteful designs for lodges or ornamented cottages, since not only the building itself, but the winding path that leads up the acclivity, and the gate which gives entrance to the little garden, smack of the pencil and the graver.

For a picture certainly, and probably from a picture, was that cottage erected, although its ostensible purpose was merely that of a receiving-house for letters and parcels for the Park; to which the present inhabitant, a jolly, bustling, managing dame, of great activity and enterprise in her own peculiar line, has added the profitable occupation of a thriving and well-accustomed village-shop: contaminating the picturesque old-fashioned bay-window of the fancy letter-house, by the vulgarities of red-herrings, tobacco, onions, and salt-butter; a sight which must have made the projector of her elegant dwelling stare again, -and forcing her customers to climb up and down an ascent almost as steep as the roof of a house, whenever they wanted a penny-worth of needles, or a half-penny-worth of snuff; a toil whereat some of our poor old dames groaned aloud. Sir Henry threatened to turn her out, and her customers threatened to turn her off; but neither of these events happened. Dinah Forde appeased her landlord and managed her customers: for Dinah Forde was a notable woman; and it is really surprising what great things, in a small way, your notable woman will compass.

Besides Mrs. Dinah Forde, and her apprentice, a girl of ten years old, the letter-house had lately acquired another occupant, in the shape of Dinah's tenant or lodger,—I don't know which word best expresses the nature of the arrangement,—my old friend, Sam Page, the Rat-catcher; who, together with his implements of office, two ferrets, and four mongrels, inhabited a sort of shed or outhouse at the back of the premises,—serving, "especially the curs," as Mrs. Forde was wont to express herself, "as a sort of guard and protection to a lone woman's property."

Sam Page was, as I have said, an old acquaintance of our's, although neither as a resident of Aberleigh, nor in his capacity of rat-catcher, both of which were recent assumptions. It was, indeed, a novelty to see Sam Page as a resident any where. His abode seemed to be the highway. One should as soon have expected to find a gipsy within stone walls, as soon have looked for a hare in her last year's form, or a bird in her old nest, as for Sam Page in the same place a month together: so completely did he belong to that order which the lawyers call vagrants, and the common people designate by the significant name of trampers; and so entirely of all rovers did he seem the most roving, of all wanderers the most unsettled. The winds, the clouds, even our English weather, were but a type of his mutability.

Our acquaintance with him had commenced above twenty years ago, when, a lad of some fifteen or thereaway, he carried muffins and cakes about the country. The whole house was caught by his intelligence and animation, his light active figure, his keen grey eye, and the singular mixture of shrewdness and good-humour in his sharp but pleasant features. Nobody's muffins could go down but Sam Page's. We turned off our old stupid deaf cakeman, Simon Brown, and appointed Sam on the instant. (N. B. This happened at the period of a general election, and Sam wore the right colour, and Simon the wrong.) Three times a week he was to call. Faithless wretch!—he never called again! He-took to selling election ballads, and carrying about hand-bills. We waited for him a fortnight, went muffinless for fourteen days, and then, our candidate being fairly elected, and blue and yellow returned to their original non-importance, were fain to put up once more with poor old deaf Simon Brown.

Sam's next appearance was in the character of a letter-boy, when he and a donkey set up a most spirited opposition to Thomas Hearne and the post-cart. Every body was dissatisfied with Thomas Hearne, who had committed more sins than I can remember, of forgetfulness, irregularity, and all manner of postman-like faults; and Sam, when applying for employers, made a most successful canvass, and for a week performed miracles of punctuality. At the end of that time he began to commit, with far greater vigour than his predecessor, Thomas Hearne, the several sins for which that worthy had been discarded. On Tuesday he forgot to call for the bag in

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the evening; on Wednesday he omitted to bring it in the morning; on Thursday he never made his appearance at all; on Friday his employers gave him warning; and on Saturday they turned him off. So ended this hopeful experiment.

Still, however, he continued to travel the country in various capacities. First, he carried a tray of casts; then a basket of Staffordshire ware; then he cried cherries; then he joined a troop of ruddle-men, and came about redder than a red Indian; then he sported a barrel-organ, a piece of mechanism of no small pretensions, having two sets of puppets on the top, one of girls waltzing, the other of soldiers at drill; then he drove a knife-grinder's wheel; then he led a bear and a very accomplished monkey; then he escorted a celebrated company of dancing dogs; and then, for a considerable time, during which he took a trip to India and back, we lost sight of him.

He reappeared, however, at B. Fair, where one year he was showman to the Living Skeleton, and the next a performer in the tragedy of the Edinburgh Murders, as exhibited every half-hour at the price of a penny to each person. Sam showed so much talent for melodrame, that we fully expected to find him following his new profession, which offered all the advantage of the change of place and of character which his habits required; and on his being again, for several months, an

absentee, had little doubt but he had been promoted from a booth to a barn, and even looked for his name amongst a party of five strollers, three men and two women, who issued play-bills at Aberleigh, and performed tragedy, comedy, opera, farce, and pantomime, with all the degrees and compounds thereof described by Polonius, in the great room at the Rose, divided for the occasion into a row of chairs called the Boxes, at a shilling per seat, and two of benches called the Pit, at sixpence. I even suspected that a Mr. Theodore Fitzhugh, the genius of the company, might be Sam Page fresh christened. But I was mistaken. Sam, when I saw him again, and mentioned my suspicion, pleaded guilty to a turn for the drama; he confessed that he liked acting of all things, especially tragedy, "it was such fun." But there was a small obstacle to his pursuit of the more regular branches of the histrionic art-the written drama: our poor friend could not read. To use his own words, "he was no scholar;" and on recollecting certain small aberrations which had occurred during the three days that he carried the letter-bag, and professed to transact errands, such as the mis-delivery of notes, and the non-performance of written commissions, we were fain to conclude that, instead of having, as he expressed it, "somehow or other got rid of his learning," learning was a blessing which Sam had never possessed, and that a great luminary was lost to the stage simply from the accident of not knowing his alphabet.

Instead of being, as we had imagined, ranting in Richard, or raving in Lear, our unlucky hero had been amusing himself by making a voyage to the West Indies, and home by the way of America, having had some thoughts of honouring the New World by making it the scene of his residence, or rather of his peregrinations; and a country where the whole population seems moveable, would, probably, have suited him: but the yellow fever seized him, and pinned him fast at the very beginning of his North American travels; and, sick and weary, he returned to England, determined, as he said, "to take a room and live respectably."

The apartment on which he fixed was, as I have intimated, an outhouse belonging to Mrs. Dinah Forde, in which he took up his abode the beginning of last summer, with his two ferrets, harmless, foreign-looking things, (no native English animal has so outlandish an appearance as the ferret, with its long limber body, its short legs, red eyes, and ermine-looking fur,) of whose venom, gentle as they looked, he was wont to boast amain; four little dogs, of every variety of mongrel ugliness, whose eminence in the same quality nobody could doubt, for one had lost an eye in battle, and one an ear, the third halted in his fore quarters, and the fourth limped behind; and a jay of great talent and

beauty, who turned his pretty head this way and that, and bent and bowed most courteously when addressed, and then responded in words equally apt and courteous to all that was said to him. Mrs. Dinah Forde fell in love with that jay at first sight; borrowed him of his master, and hung him at one side of her door, where he soon became as famous all through the parish as the talking bird in the Arabian tales, or the parrot Vert-vert, immortalized by Gresset.

Sam's own appearance was as rat-catcher-like, I had almost said as venomous, as that of his retinue. His features sharper than ever, thin, and worn, and sallow, yet arch and good-humoured withal; his keen eye and knowing smile, his pliant active figure, and the whole turn of his equipment, from the shabby straw hat to the equally shabby long gaiters, told his calling almost as plainly as the sharp heads of the ferrets, which were generally protruded from the pockets of his dirty jean jacket, or the bunch of dead rats with which he was wont to parade the streets of B. on a market-day. He seemed, at last, to have found his proper vocation; and having stuck to it for four or five months, with great success and reputation, there seemed every chance of his becoming stationary at Aberleigh.

In his own profession his celebrity was, as I have said, deservedly great. The usual complaint against rat-catchers, that they take care not to ruin the stock, that they are sure to leave breeders enough, could not be applied to Sam; who, poor fellow, never was suspected of forethought in his life; and who, in this case, had evidently too much delight in the chase himself, to dream of checking or stopping it, whilst there was a rat left unslain. On the contrary, so strong was the feeling of his sportmanship, and that of his poor curs, that one of his grand operations, on the taking in of a wheat-rick, for instance, or the clearing out of a barn, was sure to be attended by all the idle boys and unemployed men in the village,-by all, in short, who, under the pretence of helping, could make an excuse to their wives, their consciences, or the parish-officers. The grand battue, on emptying Farmer Brookes's great barn, will be long remembered in Aberleigh; there was more noise made, and more beer drunk, than on any occasion since the happy marriage of Miss Phœbe and the patten-maker; it even emulated the shouts and the tipsiness of the B. election—and that's a bold word! The rats killed were in proportion to the din—and that is a bold word too! I am really afraid to name the number, it seemed to myself, and would appear to my readers, so incredible. Sam and Farmer Brookes were so proud of the achievement, that they hung the dead game on the lower branches of the great oak outside the gate, after the fashion practised by mole-catchers, to the unspeakable consternation of a cockney cousin of the good farmer's,

a very fine lady, who had never in her life before been out of the sound of Bow bell, and who, happening to catch sight of this portentous crop of acorns in passing under the tree, caused her husband, who was driving her, to turn the gig round, and, notwithstanding remonstrance and persuasion, and a most faithful promise that the boughs should be dismantled before night, could not be induced to set foot in a place where the trees were, to use her own words, "so heathenish," and betook herself back to her own domicile at Holborn Bars, in great and evident perplexity as to the animal or vegetable quality of the oak in question \*.

Another cause of the large assemblage at Sam's rathunts was, besides the certainty of good sport, the eminent popularity of the leader of the chase. Sam was an universal favourite. He had good-fellowship enough to conciliate the dissipated, and yet stopped short of the license which would have disgusted the sober,—was pleasant-spoken, quick, lively, and intelligent,—sang a good song, told a good story, and had a kindness of

• Moles are generally, and rats occasionally, strung on willows when killed; not much to the improvement of the beauty of the scenery. I don't know any thing that astounds a Londoner more than the sight of a tree bearing such fruit. The plum-pudding tree, whereof mention is made in the pleasant and veracious travels of the Baron Munchausen, could not appear more completely a lusus natura.



temper, and a lightness of heart, which rendered him a most exhilarating and coveted companion to all in his own station. He was, moreover, a proficient in country games; and so eminent at cricket especially, that the men of Aberleigh were no sooner able, from his residence in the parish, to count him amongst their eleven, than they challenged their old rivals, the men of Hinton, and beat them forthwith.

Two nights before the return match, Sam, shabbier even than usual, and unusually out of spirits, made his appearance at the house of an old Aberleigh cricketer, still a patron and promoter of that noble game, and the following dialogue took place between them:

- " Well, Sam, we are to win this match."
- " I hope so, please your honour. But I'm sorry to say I shan't be at the winning of it."
- "Not here, Sam! What, after rattling the stumps about so gloriously last time, won't you stay to finish them now? Only think how those Hinton fellows will crow! You must stay over Wednesday."
- " I can't, your honour. 'Tis not my fault. But, here I've had a lawyer's letter on the part of Mrs. Forde, about the trifle of rent, and a bill that I owe her; and if I'm not off to-night, Heaven knows what she'll do with me!"
- "The rent—that can't be much. Let's see if we can't manage"—

- "Aye, but there's a longish bill, sir," interrupted Sam. "Consider, we are seven in family."
- " Seven!" interrupted, in his turn, the other interlocutor.
- "Aye, sir, counting the dogs and the ferrets, poor beasts! for I suppose she has not charged for the jay's board, though 'twas that unlucky bird made the mischief."
- "The jay! What could he have to do with the matter? Dinah used to be as fond of him as if he had been her own child! and I always thought Dinah Forde a good-natured woman."
- "So she is, in the main, your honour," replied Sam, twirling his hat, and looking half shy and half sly, at once knowing and ashamed. "So she is, in the main; but this, somehow, is a particular sort of an affair. You must know, sir," continued Sam, gathering courage as he went on, "that at first the widow and I were very good friends, and several of these articles which are charged in the bill, such as milk for the ferrets, and tea and lump-sugar, and young onions for myself, I verily thought were meant as presents; and so I do believe at the time she did mean them. But, howsoever, Jenny Dobbs, the nursery-maid at the Park, (a pretty black-eyed lass—perhaps your honour may have noticed her walking with the children), she used to come out of an evening like to see us play cricket, and then she praised

my bowling, and then I talked to her, and so at last we began to keep company; and the jay, owing, I suppose, to hearing me say so sometimes, began to cry out, "Pretty Jenny Dobbs!"

- " Well, and this affronted the widow?"
- " Past all count, your honour. You never saw a woman in such a tantrum. She declared I had taught the bird to insult her, and posted off to Lawyer Latitat. And here I have got this letter, threatening to turn me out, and put me in gaol, and what not, from the lawyer; and Jenny, a false-hearted jade, finding how badly matters are going with me, turns round and says, that she never meant to have me, and is going to marry the French Mounseer, (Sir Henry's French valet,) a foreigner and a papist, who may have a dozen wives before for any thing she can tell. These women are enough to drive a man out of his senses!" And poor Sam gave his hat a mighty swing, and looked likely to cry from a mixture of grief, anger, and vexation. "These women are enough to drive a man mad!" reiterated Sam, with increased energy.
- "So they are, Sam," replied his host, administering a very efficient dose of consolation, in the shape of a large glass of Cognac brandy; which, in spite of its coming from his rival's country, Sam swallowed with hearty good-will. "So they are. But Jenny's not worth fretting about: she's a poor feckless thing after

all, fitter for a Frenchman than an Englishman. If I were you, I would make up to the widow: she's a person of property, and a fine comely woman into the bargain. Make up to the widow, Sam; and drink another glass of brandy to your success!"

And Sam followed both pieces of advice. He drank the brandy, and he made up to the widow, the former part of the prescription probably inspiring him with courage to attempt the latter; and the lady was propitious, and the wedding speedy: and the last that I heard of them was, the jay's publishing the banns of marriage, under a somewhat abridged form, from his cage at the door of Mrs. Dinah's shop, (a proceeding at which she seemed, outwardly, scandalised; but over which, it may be suspected, she chuckled inwardly, or why not have taken in the cage?) and the French valet's desertion of Jenny Dobbs, whom he, in his turn, jilted; and the dilemma of Lawyer Latitat, who found himself obliged to send in his bill for the threatening letter to the identical gentleman to whom it was addressed. rest, the cricket match was won triumphantly, the wedding went off with great eclát, and our accomplished rat-catcher is, we trust, permanently fixed in our good village of Aberleigh.

## THE COUSINS.

Towards the middle of the principal street in my native town of Cranley, stands, or did stand, for I speak of things that happened many years back, a very long-fronted, very regular, very ugly brick house, whose large gravelled court, flanked on each side by offices reaching to the street, was divided from the pavement by iron gates and palisades, and a row of Lombardy poplars, rearing their slender columns so as to veil, without shading, a mansion which evidently considered itself, and was considered by its neighbours, as holding the first rank in the place. That mansion, indisputably the best in the town, belonged, of course, to the lawyer; and that lawyer was, as may not unfrequently be found in small places, one of the most eminent solicitors in the county.

Richard Molesworth, the individual in question, was a person obscurely born and slenderly educated, who, by dint of prudence, industry, integrity, tact, and luck, had risen through the various gradations of writing

clerk, managing clerk, and junior partner, to be himself the head of a great office, and a man of no small property or slight importance. Half of Cranley belonged to him, for he had the passion for brick and mortar often observed amongst those who have accumulated large fortunes in totally different pursuits, and liked nothing better than running up rows and terraces, repairing villas, and rebuilding farm houses. The better half of Cranley called him master, to say nothing of six or seven snug farms in the neighbourhood, of the goodly estate and manor of Sanford, famous for its preserves and fisheries, or of a command of floating capital which borrowers, who came to him with good securities in their hands, found almost inexhaustible. In short, he was one of those men with whom every thing had prospered through life; and in spite of a profession too often obnoxious to an unjust, because sweeping, prejudice, there was a pretty universal feeling amongst all who knew him that his prosperity was deserved. A kind temper, a moderate use of power and influence, a splendid hospitality, and that judicious liberality which shows itself in small things as well as in great ones (for it is by twopenny savings that men get an ill name), served to ensure his popularity with high and low. Perhaps, even his tall, erect, portly figure, his good-humoured countenance, cheerful voice, and frank address, contributed something

to his reputation; his remarkable want of pretension or assumption of any sort certainly did, and as certainly the absence of every thing striking, clever, or original, in his conversation. That he must be a man of personal as well as of professional ability, no one tracing his progress through life could for a moment doubt; but, reversing the witty epigram on our wittiest monarch, he reserved his wisdom for his actions, and whilst all that he did showed the most admirable sense and judgment, he never said a word that rose above the level of the merest common-place, trivial, inoffensive, civil, and safe.

So accomplished, both in what he was and in what he was not, our lawyer, at the time of which we write, had been for many years the oracle of the country gentlemen, held all public offices not inconsistent with each other, which their patronage could bestow, and in the shape of stewardships, trusts, and agencies, managed half the landed estates in the county. He was even admitted into visiting intercourse, on a footing of equality very uncommon in the aristocratic circles of country society—a society which is, for the most part, quite as exclusive as that of London, though in a different way. For this he was well suited, not merely by his own unaffected manners, high animal spirits, and nicety of tact, but by the circumstances of his domestic

arrangements. After having been twice married, Mr. Molesworth found himself, at nearly sixty, a second time a widower.

His first wife had been a homely, frugal, managing woman, whose few hundred pounds and her saving habits had, at that period of his life, for they were early united, conduced in their several ways to enrich and benefit her equally thrifty but far more aspiring hus-She never had a child; and, after doing him all possible good in her lifetime, was so kind as to die just as his interest and his ambition required more liberal housekeeping and higher connexion, each of which, as he well knew, would repay its cost. For connexion accordingly he married, choosing the elegant though portionless sister of a poor baronet, by whom he had two daughters, at intervals of seven years; the eldest being just of sufficient age to succeed her mother as mistress of the family, when she had the irreparable misfortune to lose the earliest, the tenderest, and the most inestimable friend that a young woman can have. Very precious was the memory of her dear mother to Agnes Molesworth! Although six years had passed between her death and the period at which our little story begins, the affectionate daughter had never ceased to lament her loss.

It was to his charming daughters that Mr. Molesworth's pleasant house owed its chief attraction. Conscious of his own deficient education, no pains or money had been spared in accomplishing them to the utmost height of fashion.

The least accomplished, was, however, as not unfrequently happens, by far the most striking; and many a high-born and wealthy client, disposed to put himself thoroughly at ease at his solicitor's table, and not at all shaken in his purpose by the sight of the pretty Jessy,a short, light, airy girl, with a bright sparkling countenance, all lilies and roses, and dimples and smiles, sitting, exquisitely dressed, in an elegant morning room, with her guitar in her lap, her harp at her side, and her drawing table before her,-has suddenly felt himself awed into his best and most respectful breeding, when introduced to her retiring but self-possessed elder sister, dressed with an almost matronly simplicity, and evidently full, not of her own airs and graces, but of the modest and serious courtesy which beseemed her station as the youthful mistress of the house.

Dignity, a mild and gentle but still a most striking dignity, was the prime characteristic of Agnes Molesworth, in look and in mind. Her beauty was the beauty of sculpture, as contradistinguished from that of painting; depending mainly on form and expression, and little on colour. There could hardly be a stronger contrast than existed between the marble purity of her finely-grained complexion, the softness of her deep grey

eye, the calm composure of her exquisitely moulded features, and the rosy cheeks, the brilliant glances, and the playful animation, of Jessy. In a word, Jessy was a pretty girl, and Agnes was a beautiful woman. Of these several facts both sisters were, of course, perfectly aware; Jessy, because every body told her so, and she must have been deaf to have escaped the knowledge; Agnes, from some process equally certain, but less direct; for few would have ventured to take the liberty of addressing a personal compliment to one evidently too proud to find pleasure in any thing so nearly resembling flattery as praise.

Few, excepting her looking-glass and her father, had ever told Agnes that she was handsome, and yet she was as conscious of her surpassing beauty as Jessy of her sparkling prettiness; and, perhaps, as a mere question of appearance and becomingness, there might have been as much coquetry in the severe simplicity of attire and of manner which distinguished one sister, as in the elaborate adornment and innocent showing-off of the other. There was, however, between them exactly such a real and internal difference of taste and of character as the outward show served to indicate. Both were true, gentle, good, and kind; but the elder was as much loftier in mind as in stature, was full of high pursuit and noble purpose; had abandoned drawing, from feeling herself dissatisfied with her own performances, as

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compared with the works of real artists; reserved her musical talent entirely for her domestic circle, because she put too much of soul into that delicious art to make it a mere amusement; and was only saved from becoming a poetess, by her almost exclusive devotion to the very great in poetry—to Wordsworth, to Milton, and to Shakspeare. These tastes she very wisely kept to herself; but they gave a higher and firmer tone to her character and manners; and more than one peer, when seated at Mr. Molesworth's hospitable table, has thought within himself how well his beautiful daughter would become a coronet.

Marriage, however, seemed little in her thoughts. Once or twice, indeed, her kind father had pressed on her the brilliant establishments that had offered,—but her sweet questions, "Are you tired of me? Do you wish me away?" had always gone straight to his heart, and had put aside for the moment the ambition of his nature even for this his favourite child.

Of Jessy, with all her youthful attraction, he had always been less proud, perhaps less fond. Besides, her destiny he had long in his own mind considered as decided. Charles Woodford, a poor relation, brought up by his kindness, and recently returned into his family from a great office in London, was the person on whom he had long ago fixed for the husband of his youngest daughter, and for the immediate partner and eventual

successor to his great and flourishing business:—a choice that seemed fully justified by the excellent conduct and remarkable talents of his orphan cousin, and by the apparently good understanding and mutual affection that subsisted between the young people.

This arrangement was the more agreeable to him, a providing munificently for Jessy, it allowed him the privilege of making, as in lawyer-phrase he used to boast, "an elder son" of Agnes, who would, by this marriage of her younger sister, become one of the richest heiresses of the county. He had even, in his own mind, elected her future spouse, in the person of a young baronet who had lately been much at the house, and in favour of whose expected addresses (for the proposal had not yet been made—the gentleman had gone no farther than attentions) he had determined to exert the paternal authority which had so long lain dormant.

But in the affairs of love, as in all others, man is born to disappointment. "L'homme propose, et Dieu dispose," is never truer than in the great matter of matrimony. So found poor Mr. Molesworth, who—Jessy having arrived at the age of eighteen, and Charles at that of two-and-twenty,—offered his pretty daughter and the lucrative partnership to his pennyless relation, and was petrified with astonishment and indignation to find the connexion very respectfully but very firmly declined.

The young man was much distressed and agitated; "he had the highest respect for Miss Jessy; but he could not marry her—he loved another!" And then he poured forth a confidence as unexpected as it was undesired by his incensed patron, who left him in undiminished wrath and increased perplexity.

This interview had taken place immediately after breakfast; and when the conference was ended, the provoked father sought his daughters, who, happily unconscious of all that had occurred, were amusing themselves in their splendid conservatory—a scene always as becoming as it is agreeable to youth and beauty. Jessy was flitting about like a butterfly amongst the fragrant orange trees and the bright geraniums; Agnes standing under a superb fuschia that hung over a large marble basin, her form and attitude, her white dress, and the classical arrangement of her dark hair, giving her the look of some nymph or naiad, a rare relic of Grecian art. Jessy was prattling gaily, as she wandered about, of a concert which they had attended the evening before at the county town:—

"I hate concerts!" said the pretty little flirt. "To sit bolt upright on a hard bench for four hours, between the same four people, without the possibility of moving, or of speaking to any body, or of any body's getting to us! Oh! how tiresome it is!"

"I saw Sir Edmund trying to slide through the crowd

to reach you," said Agnes, a little archly: "his presence would, perhaps, have mitigated the evil. But the barricade was too complete; he was forced to retreat, without accomplishing his object."

"Yes, I assure you, he thought it very tiresome; he told me so when we were coming out. And then the music!" pursued Jessy; "the noise that they call music! Sir Edmund says that he likes no music except my guitar, or a flute on the water; and I like none except your playing on the organ, and singing Handel on a Sunday evening, or Charles Woodford's reading Milton and bits of Hamlet."

"Do you call that music?" asked Agnes, laughing. "And yet," continued she, "it is most truly so, with his rich Pasta-like voice, and his fine sense of sound; and to you, who do not greatly love poetry for its own sake, it is, doubtless, a pleasure much resembling in kind that of hearing the most thrilling of melodies on the noblest of instruments. I myself have felt such a gratification in hearing that voice recite the verses of Homer or of Sophocles in the original Greek. Charles Woodford's reading is music."

"It is a music which you are neither of you likely to hear again," interrupted Mr. Molesworth, advancing suddenly towards them; "for he has been ungrateful, and I have discarded him."

Agnes stood as if petrified: "Ungrateful! oh, father!"

- "You can't have discarded him, to be sure, papa," said Jessy, always good-natured; "poor Charles! what can he have done?"
- "Refused your hand, child," said the angry parent; "refused to be my partner and son-in-law, and fallen in love with another lady! What have you to say for him now?"
- "Why really, papa," replied Jessy, "I'm much more obliged to him for refusing my hand than to you for offering it. I like Charles very well for a cousin, but I should not like such a husband at all; so that if this refusal be the worst that has happened, there's no great harm done." And off the gipsey ran; declaring that "she must put on her habit, for she had promised to ride with Sir Edmund and his sister, and expected them every minute."

The father and his favourite daughter remained in the conservatory.

- "That heart is untouched, however," said Mr. Molesworth, looking after her with a smile.
- "Untouched by Charles Woodford, undoubtedly," replied Agnes, "but has he really refused my sister?"
  - " Absolutely."
  - " And does he love another?"
  - "He says so, and I believe him."
  - " Is he loved again?"
  - "That he did not say."

- " Did he tell you the name of the lady?"
- " Yes."
- " Do you know her?"
- " Yes."
- " Is she worthy of him?"
- " Most worthy."
- "Has he any hope of gaining her affections? Oh! he must! he must! What woman could refuse him?"
- "He is determined not to try. The lady whom he loves is above him in every way; and much as he has counteracted my wishes, it is an honourable part of Charles Woodford's conduct, that he intends to leave his affection unsuspected by its object."

Here ensued a short pause in the dialogue, during which Agnes appeared trying to occupy herself with collecting the blossoms of a Cape jessamine, and watering a favourite geranium; but it would not do: the subject was at her heart, and she could not force her mind to indifferent occupations. She returned to her father, who had been anxiously watching her motions, and the varying expression of her countenance, and resumed the conversation.

"Father! perhaps it is hardly maidenly to avow so much, but although you have never in set words told me your intentions, I have yet seen and known, I can hardly tell how, all that your too kind partiality towards

me has designed for your children. You have mistaken me, dearest father, doubly mistaken me; first, in thinking me fit to fill a splendid place in society; next, in imagining that I desired such splendour. You meant to give Jessy and the lucrative partnership to Charles Woodford, and designed me and your large possessions for our wealthy and titled neighbour. And with some little change of persons these arrangements may still, for the most part, hold good. Sir Edmund may still be your son-in-law and your heir, for he loves Jessy, and Jessy loves him. Charles Woodford may still be your partner and your adopted son, for nothing has chanced that need diminish your affection or his merit. him to the woman he loves. She must be ambitious indeed, if she be not content with such a destiny. And let me live on with you, dear father, single and unwedded, with no thought but to contribute to your comfort, to cheer and brighten your declining years. not let your too great fondness for me stand in the way of their happiness! Make me not so odious to them and to myself, dear father! Let me live always with you, and for you-always your own poor Agnes!" And, blushing at the earnestness with which she had spoken, she bent her head over the marble basin, whose waters reflected the fair image, as if she had really been the Grecian statue, to which, whilst he listened, her fond father's fancy had compared her: "Let me live single

with you, and marry Charles to the woman whom he loves."

- " Have you heard the name of the lady in question? Have you formed any guess who she may be?"
- "Not the slightest. I imagined from what you said, that she was a stranger to me. Have I ever seen her?"
- "You may see her—at least you may see her reflection in the water at this very moment; for he has had the infinite presumption, the admirable good taste, to fall in love with his cousin Agnes!"
  - " Father!"
- " And now, mine own sweetest! do you still wish to live single with me?"
  - " Oh, father! father!"
- " Or do you desire that I should marry Charles to the woman of his heart?"
  - " Father! dear father!"
- "Choose, my Agnes! It shall be as you command. Speak freely. Do not cling so around me, but speak!"
- "Oh, my dear father! Cannot we all live together? I cannot leave you. But poor Charles—surely, father, we may all live together!"

And so it was settled; and a very few months proved that love had contrived better for Mr. Molesworth than he had done for himself. Jessy, with her prettiness, and her title, and her fopperies, was the very thing to be vain of—the very thing to visit for a day;—but Agnes and the cousin, whose noble character and splendid talents so well deserved her, made the pride and the happiness of his home.

# EARLY RECOLLECTIONS.

A WIDOW GENTLEWOMAN.

I HAVE never had much acquaintance with a country town life, an ignorance which I regret exceedingly, not merely because such a life comprises so much of the intelligence, cultivation, and moral excellence of that most intelligent, cultivated, and excellent body of persons, the middle classes, as they are called, of England; but because, so far as authorship is concerned, it is decidedly the sphere which presents most novelty, and would be most valuable as affording a series of unhackneved studies to an observer and delineator of common nature. To the novelist, indeed, an English provincial town offers ground almost untrodden; and the bold man who shall first adventure from the tempting regions of high life, or low life, or Irish life, or life abroad, or life in the olden times, into that sphere where he has hitherto found so many readers and so few subjects, will, if he write with truth and vividness, find his reward in the

strong and clinging interest which we never fail to feel when every-day objects are presented to us under a new and striking form—the deep and genuine gratification excited by an union of the original and the familiar. But when will such an adventurer arise? Who shall dare to delineate the humours of an apothecary? or the parties of his wife? or the loves of his daughter? Who will have courage to make a hero of an attorney? or to throw the halo of imagination around the head of a country brewer? Alas! alas! until a grand literary reform shall take place, boroughs and county towns must be content to remain in obscurity, represented in the house indeed, but absolute nullities in the library.

My acquaintance with the subject, slight as I have acknowledged it to be, has the further disadvantage of being almost wholly recollective, referring to persons who have long passed away, and to a state of things which I suspect has no present existence—for in country towns, as in other places, society has been progressing (if I may borrow that expressive Americanism) at a very rapid rate, for the last twenty years; and when I go into the goodly streets of B. (where I still possess some few younger friends) I cannot help looking around me, and wondering whether the very race of my old acquaintance be not extinct with the individuals, or whether there be still a class of respectable elderly gentlewomen, who, with no apparent object or interest

in life, do yet contrive to live, and to live happily, by the help of a little innocent gossiping, and a great deal of visiting and cards.

One of the most notable specimens of this class that I recollect—and I remember her as long as I can remember any thing-was my mother's old friend, Mrs. Nicholson. She was the childless widow of a former vicar of St. John's parish in B., and her husband's successor residing on another living, and the curate, a single man, preferring to board with a friend in the town, she still retained possession of the vicarage-house, in which she had presided for so many years, and which a limited but sufficient income enabled her to keep up on a small but comfortable scale. The house, indeed, was not of a sort to make any serious demands on her purse. It was a low, dark, dingy dwelling, situate in an angle between St. John's church and the lofty town-hall, the windows of which overtopped the very chimneys; enclosed within high walls, and looking out into a triangular court, where a few dusty poplars and yellow frost-bitten laurels combined to exclude the daylight from the little low rooms, whose small heavy sashes, of a glass older and thicker than common, afforded another protection against the beams of the blessed sun. parlour in which she usually sat had also a triangular appearance, resulting from the chimney being placed in one corner—the little chimney faced with tiny Dutch

tiles divided by a small low brass fender from a narrow hearth-rug of Mrs. Nicholson's own work, the lion rampant in the middle of which was particularly like a sandy cat, and fronted by a very dark, very bright, very old-fashioned mahogany table, hardly large enough to hold the frame on which she performed her worsted embroidery. The opposite corner displayed a beaufet, adorned with ornamental glass and china in various states of preservation; one side boasted an old settee, and another an indescribable piece of furniture called a commode, consisting of three drawers of dark mahogany. perched upon long legs, and surmounted by four shelves enclosed within glass doors, and containing a miscellaneous collection of odds and ends, one half-shelf being filled with books, Fordyce's Sermons, Young's Night Thoughts, Mrs. Glass's Cookery, and other works placed there for show and use, and the rest filled with a stuffed parrot, a shell-work grotto, some specimens of spars and ores, particularly dusty, and a curious collection of filigree.

The usual inhabitants of this apartment were Mrs. Nicholson, a huge overgrown dame, dressed in a style which twenty years ago had been twenty years out of fashion, with powdered hair and fly-caps and lappets, and a black lace tippet, looking exactly like a head-dress cut out of an old pocket-book, all bustle and speechifying, and fidget and fuss; and a very sedate, demure,

pale, sallow little woman (every thing in the house was on a small scale except its mistress), whom Mrs. Nicholson called Madge, but whose real name was Miss Day, and who filled an equivocal post in the household, half handmaiden and half companion—or rather who performed the duties of both offices—dressing her lady, waiting upon her, combing her dog, and making up caps, lappets, and tippets, in the former capacity; and writing her notes, reading her to sleep, sitting with her, and listening to her, (for with reply, or any thing that implied talking, Miss Day had little to do), in the latter.

There they dwelt, Mrs. Nicholson and Miss Day, with the dog Viper, an astonishingly ugly terrier, most unnaturally fat, a little footboy in clerical livery, and an ancient maid of all work—there they lived, patterns of decorum, (even the boy Tom, and Viper the terrier, were most staid and orderly specimens of their usually obstreperous class);—there they lived, with a regularity so punctual, that they might have set the church clock, had that important functionary been out of order, and the sun unwilling to present himself. At half-past seven they rose, at eight they breakfasted, at three they dined, at six they drank tea, at half-past six they sat down to cards, at half-past nine the pool (for quadrille was the game) finished as by instinct, and at ten precisely they went to bed. As the watchman called half-

past ten they lay down, and before he cried eleven the whole household, from Mrs. Nicholson to Viper, might be fairly presumed to be at rest.

Sunday made little variation in this routine, except the episode of going to church, the change in the dinner hour from three to half-past one, and the substitution of Miss Day's reading the late doctor's manuscript sermons during the time which, on the other six days, was devoted to quadrille. The stock of sermons was not very large; and three hours' reading, weekly, soon got through them; but Mrs. Nicholson, to whom Miss Day once humbly and submissively suggested Blair, would by no manner of means consent to a change: and the good lady was right; she had been used to go to sleep to these sermons in the time of her late husband, of happy memory, and knew their quality. Blair might have kept her awake.

For the rest, Mrs. Nicholson was a good woman and a kind, fond of Viper, civil to her acquaintance, and tolerably considerate towards Miss Day; who, for as little as she looked like the heroine of a novel, had that prime requisite of one, which consists in being in love; though whether that phrase may be applied to a twenty years' attachment, for such was the date of Miss Day's engagement to Mr. Thomas Cooke, writing-master in B., and parish-clerk of St. John's, may be doubtful. If fortune frowned, Mrs. Nicholson did not. She asked

him how he did every Sunday, invited him to take a glass of wine every Christmas-day, and presented him with a kettle-holder of her own best worsted work, as a token of favour and remembrance.

In the duties of acquaintanceship Mrs. Nicholson was pre-eminent. Never was woman so regular in paying and returning visits, whether morning or evening—in sending to inquire after the sick, to condole on deaths, and congratulate on marriages. At the very moment prescribed by etiquette (the etiquette of a country town many years ago), the rat-tat-tat of the little footboy was heard at the door, and the pit-a-pat of the clogs, or the heavy clamp of the sedan-chair—a much more dignified conveyance for a dowager of weight in the world than any of the race of flies, whether horse-fly or man-fly—resounded in the passage. She was the very pattern of all acquaintances.

But visiting, although it was much to her, was not quite all; she had something more of the salt of life to season her summer and winter worsted-work, in the shape of two sentiments, both excellent as preservatives from ennui—a close and ancient friendship, and a gentle, harmless, innocent, gentlewomanly, Mrs. Grundy sort of hatred. Nobody that had the honour of belonging to Mrs. Nicholson's society, but must have heard of Mrs. Quelch, her aversion, and Lady Daly, her friend. Mrs. Quelch was not, as in the course of things it seemed

right that she should have been, her next neighbour; on the contrary, she lived fifty miles off, so completely out of the way, that it really seemed surprising how Mrs. Nicholson could manage to pick up, as pick up she did, so many stories about her; of the number of new bonnets she bought in the year, and the number of servants she turned away-how she was cross to the governess, and spoiled the children—and how, above all. she prevented the doctor (for Mrs. Quelch was the wife of the then vicar of St. John's, and in some circumstance arising from that juxta-position, had arisen Mrs. Nicholson's enmity) from increasing Thomas Cooke's salary, and giving a new gown to the sexton. Well! hatred and malice are, commonly speaking, very bad things, and far be it from me to enter into a general vindication of But in this particular instance I cannot help having a leaning towards the "simple sin;" for it was certainly a great comfort and amusement to Mrs. Nicholson, and could do Mrs. Quelch no harm, that lady being, as I have good cause to believe, happily ignorant that such a sentiment was entertained towards her by the ex-vicaress of St. John's, and for the most part, I fear, entirely oblivious of the very existence of the personage in question. Why might not Mrs. Nicholson hate Mrs. Quelch? especially as her expression of the feeling, and sometimes its affected suppression, were by far the most amusing parts of her conversation.

Her friendship for Lady Daly, although more amiable in itself, was, as far as her acquaintance were concerned, a much greater evil. Lady Daly's name, and Lady Daly's news, and Lady Daly's letters, were bores of the first magnitude. There was no escaping them either. It was impossible. As soon as you entered, she began with the name, and then she told you the news, and then (incredible barbarity!) after having told you every syllable of the contents, she inflicted on you the epistles in full-such epistles too! Lady Daly seems to have been that astounding person—a sensible woman, a good sort of sensible woman! and her letters were those tremendous compositions called sensible letters, well-written letters, excellent letters! words of praise which, being translated, are commonly found to signify the most elaborate specimens of dulness that are to be met with out Her ladyship's epistles might pass for lessons on the art of amplification. It was wonderful how little meaning she could contrive to spread over four pages. They wanted even the seasoning of malice. Doubtless Mrs. Nicholson's answers were more amusing-she had Mrs. Quelch to hate. I know no harm of Lady Daly, poor woman, but I never saw one of her neat-looking packets, franked by her son Sir John (the son's M.P.ship had probably tended to make his mamma epistolary), emerge from her correspondent's huge pocket without wishing them both in the Red Sea.

In other respects Mrs. Nicholson's conversation was pretty much like that of other elderly gentlewomen. She talked of her good husband, the doctor, and showed his portrait in a bracelet — a faded miniature in full canonicals—displaying at the same time a chalk drawing of herself as a shepherdess, which had been taken at the same period by an artist of similar talent. She praised the weather of her youth, and abused that of the present time, as every body begins to do who has turned the point of forty; she was afraid of the opposition, and attached to the ministry; did not like the taxes, but hated the French; disliked new fashions; deprecated late hours; always petted Viper, and sometimes snubbed Miss Day.

• How fashions come round again! Many a fine lady now carries on her fair wrist, her husband's "picture in little," although the costume may be presumed to be somewhat different. Indeed, in these degenerate days, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to match the full swelling burly buzz wig, and the rustling bustling silk gown, redolent in every fold of clerical dignity, bearing the defunct owner's D.D.-ship on their very front. Nothing has been seen like them since the gown and wig of Dr. Parr.

# CHRISTMAS AMUSEMENTS.

(No. II.)

On the next evening, as pre-arranged, we met in the great Oriel apartment to enjoy our promised charades. There had been a talk of a dressed charade-a scene or two in full costume; and the recess which gave its name to the chamber, and which contained a beautiful gothic window over the porch, was well adapted for the purpose. requires, however, some courage to disrobe unnecessarily in a frosty night in January; and there being no young lady present except their sisters, Charles and Tom did not find their vanity sufficiently interested to supply the adequate motive for such an exertion. Besides which. their first charade, as they affirmed, required no change of apparel, so that the recess, with an Indian screen before it, was devoted to the purpose of a green-room, and we, the audience, assembled on one side of the fire-place, whilst the actors, after arranging their properties (two chairs and an easel) on the stage, and announcing what

the scene was intended to represent, proceeded in their performance, with as little interruption as could well be expected; with none, indeed, (for applause must not be called interruption) except once when Annie, in her zeal to help away with the easel, knocked down the screen, waking her father from a comfortable nap by the clatter, and oversetting her brother Charles, the Talbot of the charade. With this slight exception all went well.

#### CHARADE THE FIRST\*.

Scene the First. Beauchamp's House.

BEAUCHAMP at the Easel. Enter TALBOT.

Talbot. What, Beauchamp! at the easel this morning? This is a fresh accès. I thought you had forsworn

\* Perhaps it may not be wholly unnecessary to mention, that the fashionable amusement of acted charades resembles, but with greater intricacy, the well known French diversion of proverbs, of which last, by the way, a collection was published by no less a personage than Catherine of Russia. The whole little drama is literally a riddle of that species called a charade; consisting, in the present instance, of a word of two syllables, the first of which is to be gathered from the opening scene; the second from the next; and the third or whole from the concluding one.

painting ever since we saw the masterpieces of art at Florence and the Vatican.

Beauchamp. Ha, Talbot! Pray take a chair. Forsworn Art? Yes, as a pursuit, as an object of ambition and vanity, certainly yes. But as a record of sentiment, as certainly no. It is one thing to compete with the Titians and Rafaels in Venuses and Madonnas, and another to endeavour to transfer to canvas, however faintly, the real charms of a living beauty.

Tal. "An affair of sentiment!" Ho! ho! "A living beauty!" There is a lady in the case, then. Well! every man to his taste. I had rather follow the hounds on my good steed Bayard, over the Leicestershire country, and break my neck, if so it chance, in a fox-chase, than break my heart by pursuing the fairest nymph that ever wore petticoats. But every man to his taste. Do I know the lady?

Beau. I think not.

Tal. And may one inquire her name?

Beau. It is a name that suits her well; the sweetest name ever breathed by poet or lover—Julia.

Tal. Julia! Pooh! Her family name?

Beau. Vernon; Miss Julia Vernon.

Tal. Vernon. Oh! A daughter of the General's. One of the four Miss Vernons whom one hears of everywhere with their tall mamma?

Beau. The loveliest of that lovely family. Oh, my

dear Talbot! neither painting nor poetry can give the faintest image of her charms—<sup>a</sup> So soft, so sweet, so delicate she came, youth's opening rose——"

Tal. Spare me the poetry, I beseech you. I shall see the Goddess herself to-night at her aunt Lady Dashleigh's, and then you may introduce me.

Beau. I shan't be able to go to Lady Dashleigh's—An odious man-dinner at the Clarendon; and then the House—There'll be no escaping before the division. But I'll get Harry Lescombe to introduce you; and you must come to-morrow morning and tell me what you think of her. Take care of your heart.

Tal. Yes, I'll come. I'll be sure to come. I am sorry for this love affair, very sorry; for I thought we should have got you down amongst us at Melton Mowbray next season. You were talking of forming a stud; and there are some capital hunters on sale at Tattersall's. But when once a man sets his heart on marrying—Let us look at her portrait, however—I take for granted that it is her portrait.

Beau. A faint copy of the charms of the original. There! [Displaying the picture.]

Tal. Really I did not think you had been so good an artist. A very pretty bit of colour, indeed; very delicately hit off. Rather too much of the lily, though, to suit my taste. Is Miss Julia really so pale?

Beau. She has just as much colour as any woman

ought to have—the maiden-rose tint. This cheek would bear a thought more—I can add it in a moment.

Tal. Yes; we all know that a little rouge is easily put on a lady's face.

Beau. (seating himself at the easel.) Hold thy irreverent tongue, and reach me yonder brush—not that—the farther one. Thank you. Now, you shall see in a moment—(Painting) Heavens! What have I done! The whole picture is ruin'd—spoilt for ever! This is the brush with which I was adding the deepest shades to her lovely dark hair, the opaque brush—only see—ruined for ever! Don't say a word, my dear fellow. It's entirely my fault! Irredeemably spoilt—A week's work—such a likeness—and ruined for ever! [Exeunt.]

Scene the Second.—The same Apartment.

## Enter TALBOT to BEAUCHAMP.

Beau. How late you are! I was on the point of calling to see what detained you.

Tal. A thousand pardons! I was kept at home by the sudden lameness of Bayard—you know Bayard finest hunter in England—cost me a cool three hundred last season—can't put his off fore-foot to the ground.

Beau. Very sorry. Were you at Lady Dashleigh's last night?

Tal. Yes. Sent for Colman. Colman thinks it's



only a prick—touched in the shoeing—and advises one of his bar shoes; but my groom—

Beau. Did you see Julia?

Tal. Yes. My groom says-

Beau. Were you introduced to her?

Tal. Yes. My groom thinks, and he knows more of Bayard's action than Colman——

Beau. Hang Colman! Did you dance with Julia?

Tal. No. My groom says that Bayard-

Beau. Hang Bayard!

Tal. Hang Bayard! Really, Mr. Beauchamp-

Beau. My dear friend, I do not mean the slightest offence to your horse—finest animal in England! But do talk to me of Julia! Did you converse with her? Did you see her dance? Did you hear her sing?

Tal. Ye-es.

Beau. Well! And were you not charmed, enchanted? Do you not think her exquisitely beautiful? Her figure so light and graceful? Her countenance so full of sensibility and sweetness? Is not she an angel?

Tal. A fineish girl.

Beau. And then, her singing, her dancing, her conversation!

Tal. Pretty fair.

Beau. Talbot, do you know of whom you are speaking? Pretty fair!

Tal. Why, to confess the truth, my dear Beauchamp,

this Julia of yours is not altogether one of my beauties. She is too pale, too tall, too thin, too lanky, shows too much bone. I like a little flesh and blood.

Beau. Gracious heaven, what coarseness of idea!

Tal. And, moreover, I don't like the breed. I have a regard for you, Beauchamp; and I can't help giving you warning, that Mrs. Vernon is the most determined husband-hunting mamma in London; we all know that the General is as poor as Job, and as proud as Lucifer; and I have it from the best authority, that Miss Julia herself is as arrant a flirt——

Beau. Be silent, Mr. Talbot; be silent, sir. It was but yesterday that you were the cause of my defacing an imperfect copy of her divine features. To-day you would sully her spotless reputation. Go back to your groom and Bayard; they are your fit companions. Leave me, sir.

Tal. I take no notice of what you say, my good friend; because you are in a passion, and a lover has a madman's privilege: but I have an old regard for you, and I advise you not to be too hasty in your proceedings.

Beau. Out of my house, sir! Get out instantly.

Tal. Take time to consider. Look before you leap. Beau. Off with you, sir!—I have a good mind to kick him down stairs. In a passion, indeed! Impertinent puppy! I never was cooler in my life. I'll go to

the general, and propose for her this moment !—Insufferable coxcomb! (Exit.)

Scene the Third .- Regent Street.

BEAUCHAMP and TALBOT, meeting.

Beau. Ha! Talbot, my dear fellow! I am delighted to see you. I thought you had been hunting in Leicestershire.

Tal. Just ran up for a day or two, whilst the frost holds; and very lucky to meet with you, and wish you joy in person. You got my letter?

Beau. Yes. Have you had good runs this season?

Tal. Capital. I saw the happy event in the papers, and took my chance of writing to your house in town, to congratulate, and apologise, and so forth.

Beau. No need of apologies on your part, God knows! You are a good fellow, Talbot—a real friend. It is I that ought to apologise. Ah! if I had but taken your advice. But a man must follow his destiny.

Tal. I hope the fair lady is well?

Beau. We won't talk of her, Talbot. How is Bayard, that noble steed? Does he sustain his reputation?

Tal. I refused four hundred pounds for him last week. Where have you been since August? Did you go a tour?

Beau. Yes-to the Lakes.

Tal. A pleasant excursion?

Beau. All the pleasure of travelling, my dear friend, depends on one's company—I found it a confounded bore. By the way, I've a great mind to run down to Melton with you for a week or two. Could you put me in the way of buying some good horses? I shall certainly take to fox-hunting again.

Tal. I shall be delighted, of course; but what will Mrs. Beauchamp say?

Beau. Say! What right has she to say anything? Don't talk of Mrs. Beauchamp—there's a dear fellow. Do you think you can help me to the hunters? Eh!

Tal. Why, I know that Dick Mathews had some to dispose of yesterday. I'll go and see about them.

Beau. I shall be eternally obliged to you. And hark ye, Talbot—dine with me at seven, and we'll settle about the jaunt into Leicestershire. I have some thoughts of taking a box there—a hunting box—just to run down to. Dine with me at seven.

Tal. In Harley Street?

Beau. Oh no, no! at the old place, the Clarendon—a bachelor's dinner at the Clarendon, my boy!—a snug bachelor's dinner!—Au revoir!

The Charade was received, as usual, with some laughter, a little praise, and much criticism. Every female

lantry, (need I say that the word is marriage?) and prophesied old-bachelorship, and all its evils, to the contrivers and performers. Some fault was found, too, with the bad spelling of the divided syllables; but this the actors, who had pleaded guilty to the first charge, defended stoutly, reminding their accuser, Miss Sophia, that one of her own most successful French Charades, at Florence, had been Cléopatre, of which the first syllable was represented by the key scene from Blue Beard, the second by the water spirits from Undine, the third by some pastoral of Gesner's, and the fourth by the well known catastrophe of the asp, personated on that occasion by a Bologna sausage, the cold touch of which had, as one of them asserted, frightened Sophy, who took it for a real serpent, out of her wits. "Clef and eau for Cléo," pursued Tom, "and she to talk of false spelling!" And thereupon Tom, in a dudgeon, marched to the fire, and sate down. But as the whole party, his fair critic included, pressed for another, his brother and he again retired behind the screen; and, after a little whispering consultation, during which Annie had been despatched for the weighty Memoirs of Pepys and Evelyn, which we had been looking over in the morning, and a little squabble for the choice of parts, both of them, (dramatically right, though morally wrong,) preferring the amusing coxcomb of the Admiralty, he who has left so

individual and identified a portrait of himself and his foibles, to the sage philosopher of Say Court; after a little dispute as to parts, as the fashion is amongst great actors, they announced the scene and the date, and began Charade the Second.

## CHARADE THE SECOND.

Scene the First.—St. James's Park—1667.

MR. EVELYN and MR. PEPYS meeting.

Mr. Evelyn. My worthy Mr. Pepys, how are you this morning?

Mr. Pepys. The better, assuredly, for the honour of meeting my good Mr. Evelyn. Will you take a turn in the walk? I am waiting the duke's leisure, who is, as you perceive, engaged with the king and Sir John Minnes.

Mr. Evel. Is there any thing new in town? I am but just landed at Whitehall, having come by water from my retirement of Say Court, to dine at his new house with my lord of Clarendon; and I address myself to Mr. Pepys for news, as the most absolute courtier both in statecraft and poesy.

Mr. Pepus. Oh, my good sir!—For affairs of policy. I must refer you to my Lord of Clarendon. They are too weighty for so slight a person as myself, Mr. Evelyn; but men may judge by straws which way the wind sets; and you may see my Lady Castlemaine yonder neglected and in the dumps.—That star is on the wane; but these matters are above my sphere. For the Muses, we had last night at the Duke's House a new play called the Tempest, one of Shakspeare's old drolleries revised and perfected by Dryden, wherein pretty Mrs. Nelly did really excel herself. I know of nothing else new, except a lampoon which the wits give to the Duke of Buckingham, and a new song by my Lord of Dorset. How goes on the New Society, Mr. Evelyn? And, above all, your own great work on Forest-trees?

Mr. Evel. Slowly, my good Mr. Pepys—slowly. I shall be glad to show it to you some day at Say Court, together with some other small pieces, if you can partake of my poor dinner at the old-fashioned time of twelve at noon. I hate these new-fangled hours, Mr. Pepys;—these one o'clock dinners. Our fathers, my good sir, dined at eleven. But we are a degenerate race. These are signs of the times—awful signs!

Mr. Pepys. They are so, indeed, Mr. Evelyn. But, my good sir, I most respectfully take my leave. The Duke is beckening to me.—I wish you a good day.

Mr. Evel. A good day to you, Mr. Pepys! Remem-

ber that we shall expect you at Say Court with your first leisure, and not later than noon. A good day to you, sir! [Exeunt severally, bowing.

Scene the Second.—Hyde Park—1830.

LORD JOHN LUTTRIDGE and Mr. ADEANE meeting.

A Crowd on the Serpentine.

Lord John. Ah! my dear Adeane! How long from Vienna? Are you come to show off your Austrian Spread Eagles on the Serpentine?

Mr. Adeane. Why, really, my dear lord, after the Danube, one can't think of figuring on these English puddles. Besides, the crowd! And I have left my Hamburgh skaits to follow with my trunks from Dover. Is there any news in this smoky, frosty, dirty London?

L. John. Why, not much, I believe. Bankruptcies in plenty—some talk of a general election, an early opera season, and a vast number of applications to subscribe to Almack's. But I am only just arrived myself—merely passing through from Holkham to Chatsworth.

Mr. Ad. Town seems quite empty.

L. John. Why, so I hear. And yet there can hardly be less than a hundred thousand persons in the Park at this moment. Really that officer skaits well.

Mr. Ad. But when one says town is empty, one vol. v.



means that there is nobody whom one knows—nobody fit to be known.

L. John. Now it seems to me that there are a great many people whom one should like to know—I have not seen so many pretty women together these dozen years.

Mr. Ad. Does your Lordship think so?

L. John. Why, don't you?

Mr. Ad. Really no. English noses get so red in a frost.

L. John. (Aside.) English noses! The Lord have mercy on these travelled gentlemen!

Mr. Ad. And just look at that lubber. "English awkwardness on two left legs!"

L. John. Take care of your own legs, Adeane. You are getting on a slide. This place is as slippery as glass—Take care! He'll certainly tumble—there he goes.—
(Mr. Adeane falls; Lord John helps him up.)—I hope you are not seriously hurt. No bones broke. Can you walk?

Mr. Ad. Yes, yes! This sort of accident could never have happened to me abroad; but the moment a man sets foot on this wretched island—

L. John. Why, our English elements are no respecters of persons; that must be confessed.

Mr. Ad. Does not your Lordship hear a cracking? We shall certainly be drowned.

L. John. There is not the slightest danger, except of your getting another tumble. That fall of yours has made you nervous. Keep hold of my arm, my good fellow, and I'll pilot you to Terra Firma; and then we'll go to Brookes's to while away two or three hours before dinner. The sun is but just set.—(Aside.) He'll certainly get another tumble this travelled gentleman, with his "English awkwardness on two left legs." Keep hold of me, Adeane, till we are clear of the Serpentine. Stick to me. I'll take care of you.—(Aside.) He'll never get off without another tumble. [Exeunt.

# Scene the Third .- A Study.

Mr. Frampton alone, reading a Newspaper.

Frampton (reading.) "We are sorry to be compelled to state amongst the list of failures the firm of Fitzarthur, Dawson, and Co. The elegant taste and amiable qualities of the senior partner of this old-established house will render him an object of universal sympathy."—Sympathy! These newspaper writers are pretty fellows at a word! Sympathy forsooth, universal sympathy! And Fitzarthur a bankrupt! the handsome, the graceful, the witty Henry Fitzarthur, the life of every circle, the chosen of Agnes Merivale, a bankrupt! an object of universal sympathy! Go to, Mr. Printer—I must feast my eyes once more on the paragraph. Ay, here he is

too in the Gazette. There is no mistake in the business. Fitzarthur a bankrupt!

#### Enter Servant.

Did not I give orders not to be disturbed?

Ser. A gentleman, sir, requests a moment's audience.

Fram. I am engaged.

Ser. He desired me to give this card.

Fram. (after reading the card.) Show him up. [Exit Servant.] Fitzarthur himself! My old acquaintance Henry Fitzarthur—the bankrupt! the object, as the Morning Post assures us, of universal sympathy. It were sin and shame not to dispatch him quickly.

#### Enter FITZARTHUR.

Now, sir!

Fitz. I have to apologize for an intrusion, which is, I fear, equally unwelcome and unexpected.

Fram. Waive apologies, sir; I hate them.

Fitz. So long a time has elapsed since we met, that my person is, perhaps, scarcely remembered by Mr. Frampton.

Fram. If I had forgotten you, sir, this paper would have recalled you to my memory.

Fitz. The unfortunate speculations of my partner—Fram. You all, no doubt, can tell your own story.

He perhaps might talk of his partner's supineness. But that can hardly be your business with me.

Fitz. No, sir; I waited on you to request a favour, on which my welfare, and that of my wife and children, utterly depend.

Fram. And you speak of your wife to me! Do you happen to remember, sir, the transaction on which we last met, the transaction on which we parted?

Fitz. I trusted, Frampton, that you had forgotten it.

Fram. Forgotten! I loved Agnes Merivale; I told you of my love; I made you known to her; and you, my friend (for such you dared to call yourself), became my rival, my successful rival. Treachery such as that cannot be forgotten.

Fitz. At least, I trusted that an interval of ten years had swept from your mind all bitterness of recollection.

Fram. You thought me then a fool. Where is she now?

Fitz. In London.

Fram. At your house in Baker Street?

Fitz. That house, with all that it contained, is given up to the creditors. Agnes is in humble lodgings, suited to our fortunes.

Fram. You have also a house in the New Forest? Fitz. I had.

Fram. A beautiful place, fitted up with the taste for which Agnes was famous—a fine library; a superb con-

servatory; prints and statues—you were a collector; pictures old and new—you ranked high amongst the patrons.

Fitz. I had these things. They are mine no longer.

Fram. Holly-grove—that I think was the name of your villa; a lovely spot: I passed it last summer.

Agnes had a keen relish for the beauties of nature; she must have been fond of Holly-grove?

Fitz. Her very heart was in it—it was her home, the home of her children—Alas! they may soon have none!

Fram. Ay, this poor house of mine might have been her home, but it lacks these adornments. Here are no medals, no pictures, no coins, no busts! 'Tis an old spacious mansion-house, to be sure, and stands amidst a fair number of its own acres, but it is out of date, like its master. Frampton Hall could no more compete with Holly-grove, than plain George Frampton with Henry Fitzarthur. We should have known our station.

Fitz. Be merciful, Frampton! Be merciful!

Fram. Yes! Holly-grove was a beautiful place. I saw Agnes on the lawn one evening last summer, in the midst of her children. There was a chubby infant, and two or three delicate girls, and a couple of sturdy boys, and the mother, handsomer than ever, in her stately and regal beauty, drest and appointed like a queen, with her retinue of nursery attendants, flowers under her feet, flowering shrubs over her head, the rarest exotics per-

fuming the air!—Agnes must have been happy at Hollygrove.

Fitz. Alas! alas! too happy!

Fram. The eldest child was a fine boy. Was he at school?

Fitz. At Eton.

Fram. Already! And of promise?

Fitz. Of the highest.

Fram. Intended for any profession?

Fitz. For the bar.

Fram. Indeed! Parents are apt to frame such visions.

The bar!-Well, sir, what is your pleasure with me?

Fitz. This letter—If you would condescend——

Fram. The letter is not addressed to me.

Fitz. No, it is to your friend Lord B. A small place, for which I am every way suited, is now vacant in his department; and that letter, if presented by you, and backed by your intercession, would insure it to me. I throw myself on your generosity! I implore your mercy! For the sake of the woman whom you once loved——

Fram. Hold, sir!

Fitz. For the sake of her poor children-

Fram. Those children, sir, are also yours. Have you no other channel through which to send this letter?

Fitz. None whatsoever.

Fram. No other resource? No other hope?

Fitz. None upon earth. It is the only chance that remains, to preserve us from starvation.

Fram. (tearing the letter.) Then starve!

Again the Charade was over, and some applause was given to the climax of "malice" in the last scene. "False spelling though again, Tom," cried Sophia;-" and what is worse, want of unity in the subject, three detached scenes instead of one story." "Remember Cléopatre, Sophy," rejoined Tom; "what do you say to the unity there? Blue Beard, Undine, Gesner, and Shakspeare, or Dryden,-which play did you take the asp scene from? Eh! however, four distinct authors to one Charade." "Never mind Sophy's criticisms," said Annie, "she's so clever, you know, and clever people will find faults where we simpletons see none; only give us another-pray do; and, dear Tom, let it be a little harder to find out. I like to be puzzled." "Well, Annie," replied Tom, "if Sophy will help, I'll try what I can do to perplex you; and it shall be one unbroken story, and a love story, such as young ladies like, and of the date of the commonwealth, which will please my father, if he should happen to be awake." And Sophia assenting, and Charles fetching, at Tom's instigation, a very ancient weapon of the gun or musquet genus from the armoury (which had nearly sent me off, but for

Tom's solemn promise not to fire) they again retreated behind the screen, and emerged in the guise of a pair of lovers of the seventeenth century.

### CHARADE THE THIRD.

Scene I.—An old-fashioned Garden, with Terraces, Fountains, Yew-hedges, &c.—A large Mansion in the back-ground.—Time, eight in the evening. A.D. 1657.

### MABEL GOODWIN-(alone.)

Mabel. So! Master Alfred Montresor! He promised to meet me here by eight, and the great clock in the hall wanted but five minutes full half-an-hour agone. It must be half-an-hour. I have been pacing up and down this walk, from the yew-hedge to the fountain, twenty times at least, besides going twice to the little door in the garden-wall, to be sure that it was unbolted. It can't be a minute less than half-an-hour. He had as well stay now in his hiding-place at the village, for I'll never speak to him again. Never! And yet, poor fellow—No! I'll never speak to him again!

#### Enter ALFRED MONTRESOR.

### So, Master Alfred!

Alfred. So, my pretty Mistress Mabel! Why turn away so angrily? What fault have I committed, I pray thee?

Mab. Fault? None!

Alf. Nay, nay, my little Venus of the Puritans, my princess of all Precisians, if thou be offended, tell me so.

Mab. Offended forsooth! People are never offended with people they don't care about. Offended quotha!

Alf. And is it because people don't care for people, that they bridle, and flounce, and toss, and put their pretty selves into such pretty tantrums—eh, Mistress Mabel? I am after time, sweet—but——

Mab. After time! I have been here this half-hour!—and my father fast asleep in the hall! After time!—If thou hadst cared for me—But men are all alike. There hath not been a true lover in the world since Amadis his day, the mad Paladin that my old nurse was used to talk of—and that was but a false legend. After time!—Why, if thou hadst cared for me only as much as I care for this sprig of lavender, thou would'st have been waiting for me before the chimes had rung seven. Just think of the time thou hast lost.—Now thou may'st go thy ways.—Leave me, sir!

Alf. Nay, mine own sweet love, do not offer to

snatch thy hand away. I cannot part with thee, Mabel, though thou should'st flutter like a new-caught dove. I must speak with thee. I have that to say which must be heard.

Mab. Well?

Alf. I have been dogged all day by a canting Puritan, a follower, as I take it, of thy godly father.

Mab. Jeer not my father, Alfred, although he be a roundhead and thou a cavalier. He is a brave man and a good.

Alf. He is thy father, and, therefore, sacred to me.

--Where didst thou say he is now?

Mab. I left him in the hall, just settling quietly to an after-supper nap.—Why dost thou ask?

Alf. I have been watched all day by one whom I suspect to be a spy; and I fear me, that in spite of my disguise, my false name, and my humble lodging, I am discovered.

Mab. Discovered in thy visits here? Discovered as my —— friend?

Alf. No, no, I trust not so. Therefore I delayed to come to thee till I could shake off my unwelcome follower. Not discovered as thy lover, thy friend, if such name better please thee—but as the cavalier and malignant (for so their phrase runs) Alfred Montresor.

Mab. But granting that were true, what harm hast thou committed? What hast thou to fear?

Alf. Small harm, dear Mabel; and yet in these bad days small harm may cause great fear. I have borne arms for the King; I have never acknowledged the Protector; I am known as the friend of Ormond, perhaps suspected as his agent; and, moreover, I am the rightful owner of this same estate and mansion of Montresor Hall, its parks, manors, and dependencies, bestowed by the sequestrators on thy father, Colonel Goodwin. Seest thou no fear there, fair Mabel?

Mab. Alas! alas!

Alf. Then my deceased father, stout old Sir Robert, was meddled in every plot and rising in the country, from the first year of the Rebellion to this, as I well trust, the last of the usurpation, so that the very name sounds like a fire-brand. 'Twould be held a fair service to the state, Mabel, to shoot thy poor friend; and yet I promise thee, albeit a loyal subject to King Charles, I am hardly fool enough to wage war in my own single person against Oliver, whom a mightier conqueror than himself will speedily overthrow.

Mab. A mightier conqueror!

Alf. Even the great tyrant Death—he who levels the mighty and the low—Alfred Montresor and Oliver Cromwell!

Mab. Death! Art thou then in such peril? And dost thou loiter here? I beseech thee away! away this moment! What detains thee?

Alf. That which brought me—thyself. Being in England, I came hither, more weeks ago than I care to think of, to look on my old birth-place, my old home. I saw thee, Mabel, and ever since I have felt that these halls are a thousand fold more precious to me as thy home, as thy inheritance, than ever they could have been as mine. I love thee, Mabel.

Mab. Oh go! go! To talk of love whilst thou art in such danger!

Alf. I love thee, mine own Mabel.

Mab. Go!

Alf. Wilt thou go with me? I am not rich—I have no fair mansion to take thee to; but a soldier's sword and a soldier's arm, and a true heart, Mabel! Wilt thou go with me, sweet one? I'll bring horses to the little garden door. The moon will be up at twelve—Speak, dearest? And yet this trembling hand speaks for thee. Wilt thou go with me and be my wedded wife?

Mab. I will.

[Exeunt.

Scene the Second.—The same Garden. A high Wall on one Side, with a small strong Door in it. The House in the back-ground.

Enter Alfred, from the side-door.

Alf. Mabel! Not yet arrived! Surely she cannot have changed her purpose? No, no! It were treason

against true love but to suspect her of wavering—she lingers from maiden modesty, from maiden fear, from natural affection, from all that man worships in woman. But if she knew the cause I have to dread every delay!

## Enter MABEL, from the house.

Mabel? Sweetest, how breathless thou art! Thou canst hardly stand! Rest thee on this seat a moment, my Mabel! And yet delay—Hath ought befallen to affright thee? Sit here, dearest! What hath startled thee?

Mab. I know not. And yet-

Alf. How thou tremblest still! And what—?

*Mab.* As I passed the gallery—Only feel how my heart flutters, Alfred!

Alf. Blessings on that dear heart! Calm thee, sweetest.—What of the gallery?

Mab. As I passed, methought I heard voices.

Alf. Indeed! And I, too, have missed the detected spy who hath been all day dogging my steps. Can he—but no! All is quiet in the house. Look, Mabel! All dark and silent. No light save the moonbeams dancing on the window panes with a cold pale brightness. No sound save the song of the nightingale—dost thou not hear it? It seems to come from the tall shrubby sweet-briar, which sends its fragrant breath in at yonder casement.

Mab. That is my father's chamber—my dear, dear

father! Oh, when he shall wake and find his Mabel gone, little will the breath of the sweet-briar, or the song of the nightingale, comfort him then! My dear dear father! He kissed me after prayers to-night, and laid his hand on my head and blessed me. He will never bless his poor child again.

Alf. Come, sweetest! The horses wait; the hours wear on; morning will soon be here.

Mab. Oh, what a morning to my poor, poor father! his Mabel, his only child, his beloved, his trusted! Oh, Alfred, my father! my father!

Alf. Maiden, if thou lovest thy father better than me, remain with him. It is not yet too late. I love thee, Mabel, as well as man may love on this side of idolatry; too well to steal thee away against thy will; too well to take thy hand without thy heart. The choice is still open to thee. Return to thy father's house, or wend with me. Weep not thus, dear one; but decide, and quickly.

Mab. Nay, I will go with thee, Alfred. Forgive these tears! I'll go with thee to the end of the world.

Alf. Now then. What noise is that?

Mab. Surely, surely, the turning of a key.

Alf. Ay, the door is fastened; the horses are led off. We are discovered.

Mab. Is there no other way of escape?

Alf. None. The garden is walled round. Look

at these walls, Mabel; a squirrel could scarcely climb them. Through the house is the only chance; and that—

Mab. Try the door again; I do beseech thee try. Push against it—I never knew it fastened other than by this iron bolt. Push manfully.

Alf. It is all in vain; thou thyself heard'st the key turn; and see how it resists my utmost strength. The door is surely fast. [Exeunt.

Scene the Third.—The same Part of the Garden with that represented in the first Scene.

Enter ALFRED and MABEL from the side.

Mab. See! The household is alarmed! Look at the lights! Venture not so near, dear Alfred! Conceal thee in the arbour till all is quiet. I will go meet them.

Alf. Alone?

Mab. Why, what have I to fear? Hide thee behind the yew-hedge till the first search be past, and then—

Alf. Desert thee! Hide me! And I a Montresor! But be calmer, sweetest! Thy father is too good a man to meditate aught unlawful. 'Twill be but some short restraint, with thee for my warder. Calm thee, dearest!

Enter Colonel Goodwin and a Servant, from the House.

Good. Shoot! Shoot instantly, Jonathan! Slay the

robber! Why dost thou not fire? Be'st thou in league with him? What dost thou fumble at?

Jon. So please your worship, the wind hath extinguished the touch-paper.

Good. The wind hath extinguished thy wits, I trow, that thou could'st bring nought but that old harquebuss. Return for a steel weapon. [Exit JONATHAN.] Meantime my sword—I see but one man, and surely a soldier of the Cause and the Covenant, albeit aged, may well cope with a night thief. Come on, young man. Be'st thou coward as well as robber? Defend thyself.

Mab. Oh, father! father! Would'st thou do murder before thy daughter's eyes?

Good. Cling not thus around me, maiden? What makest thou with that thief, that craven thief?

Alf. Nay, tremble not, Mabel; for thy sake I will endure even this contumely.—Put up your sword, sir; it is needless. I yield myself your prisoner. At this instant, suspicions, even as degrading as those uttered by Colonel Goodwin, may, perhaps, be warranted by my equivocal position; but when I make myself known to him, I trust that he will retract an aspersion as unworthy of his character as of mine.

Good. I do know thee. Thou art the foul malignant Alfred Montresor; the abettor of the plotting traitor Ormond; the outlawed son of the lawless cavalier who once owned this demesne.

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Alf. And knowing me for Alfred Montresor, could'st thou take me for a garden robber? Could'st thou grudge to the some time heir of these old Halls a parting glance of their venerable beauty?

Good. Young man, wilt thou tell me, darest thou tell me, that it was to gaze on this old mansion that thou didst steal hither, like a thief in the night? Alfred Montresor, can'st thou look at thy father's house and utter that falsehood? Ye were a heathenish and blinded generation, main props of tyranny and prelacy, a worldly and a darkling race, who knew not the truth;—but yet, from your earliest ancestor to the last possessor of those walls, ye had amongst the false gods whom ye worshipped one fair idol, called Honour. Alfred Montresor, I joy that thou hast yet enough of grace vouchsafed to thee to shrink from affirming that lie.

Alf. But a robber! a garden thief!

Good. Ay, a robber! I said, and I repeat, a robber, a thief, a despoiler. Hath the garden no fruit save its apricots and dewberries? No flower save the jessamine and the rose? Hath the house no treasure but its vessels of gold and silver? the cabinet no jewel but its carbuncles and its rubies? If ever thou art a father, and hast one hopeful and dutiful maiden, the joy of thine heart, and the apple of thine eye, then thou wilt hold all robbery light so that it leaves thee her, all robbers guiltless save him who would steal thy child. Weep not

thus, Mabel. And thou, young man, away. I joy that the old and useless gun defeated my angry purpose—that I slew not mine enemy on his father's ground. Away with thee, young man! Go study the parable that Nathan spake to David. I believe that there is warrant enough for thy detention, but I will not make thee prisoner in the house of thy fathers. Thank me not; but go.

Mab. Father, hear me!

Good. Within! To-morrow!

*Mab.* Nay, here and now. Thou hast pardoned him; but thou hast not pardoned me.

· Good. I have forgiven thee-I do forgive thee.

Mab. Thou knowest not half my sins! I am the prime offender, the great and unrepenting culprit. I loved him, I do love him; we are betrothed, and I will hold faithful to my vow: never shall another man wed Mabel Goodwin! Oh, father, I knew not till this very now how dear thy poor child was to thy heart.—Can'st thou break her's?

Good. Mabel, this is a vain and simple fancy.

Mab. Father, it is love.—Alfred, plead for us!

Alf. Alas! I dare not. Thou art a rich heiress; I am a poor exile.

Mab. Out on such distinctions! One word from my father; one stroke of Cromwell's pen, and thou art an exile no longer. Plead for us, Alfred!

Alf. Mabel, I dare not. Thy father is my benefactor; he has given me life and liberty. Would'st thou have me repay these gifts by bereaving him of his child?

Mab. We will not leave him. We will dwell together. Alfred, wilt thou not speak?

Good. His honourable silence hath pleaded for him better than idle words. Alfred Montresor, dost thou love this maid?

Alf. Do I love her?

Good. I believe in good truth that thou dost. Take her then from the hand of her father.—There is room enough in yonder mansion for the heir and the heiress, the old possessor and the new. Take her, and heavan bless ye, my children!

Mab. Now, bless me, mine own dear father! and bless all the accidents of this happy night—Our projected elopement—and the little door that would not let us elope—and the wind that blew out Jonathan's spark of fire—and the old useless gun that, for want of that spark, would not shoot my Alfred. Blessings on them all!

"Well, Annie," said Tom, "are you sufficiently puzzled? "Yes," replied Annie, looking graver than usual. "Pray," said she in a whisper to Mr. Mortimer, "is there such a word as matchlock? Is matchlock the name of that old gun?" "Yes," said Mr. Mortimer,

taking the weapon in hand, and proceeding to explain to her the construction of the lock. "Then that's it!" said Annie; "matchlock's the word. I should not have found it out though," added she, "had it not been for the gun."

### CHILDREN OF THE VILLAGE.

YOUNG MASTER BEN.

It was about seven o'clock one evening in the Christmas week, that I was sitting alone in our little parlour, with my feet on the fender, my dog Dash reclining against my knee (I beg Dash's pardon for having reckoned him as nobody), a glowing fire before me, and an apple roasting on the hob,—doing nothing, unless occasionally turning the apple or patting Dash's beautiful head may be accounted doings,—and entirely immersed in that perfection of lazy comfort—that piece of dreamy delight yclept a reverie.

There was, too, that additional zest to the enjoyment of indoor warmth and comfort which is derived from the effect of strong contrast without. The weather was what is usually and most expressively termed—bitter. Snow lay deep on the ground, and the dark cloudy sky gave token that the first interval of calm would produce an-

other fall. At the moment of which I speak, the wind was too high even for a snow-storm; the fierce northeast howled amain, and the icy bushes in the hedgerows rattled and crackled in the tempest, whilst the large boughs of the trees creaked like the masts of a ship at sea. It is strange that these noises, betokening so much misery to the poor wretches doomed to wander abroad, should add to the sense of snugness and security at home; -- but so it is! The selfishness, however unamiable, is too general to be ashamed of, or even to lament over; and, perhaps, a silent thankfulness for one's own superior comforts may tend to throw into the feeling that portion of good which will generally be found in the inward meditations of every human being not absolutely wicked; for the thoughts of an hour, as well as the actions of a life, are of mingled yarn; none, I fear, all virtuous,—few, I trust, utterly wicked.

My enjoyment of that blessed state the "far' niente" was, however, much too dreamy and vague to permit me to analyse my own sensations. And yet my reverie was not wholly pleasurable either. We lived in the midst of the disturbed districts; my father was at B., attending his duty (a very painful one on this occasion) as chairman of the bench; and though I had every reason to believe that the evil spirit was subsiding, and that he was at that instant sitting as quietly and as snugly as myself with his friend the high sheriff and his brother

magistrates in a warm, comfortable, elegant room at the Crown Inn, (for happen what may, justices must dine!) or at the worst, seated by a large fire taking examinations in the council chamber at B., still no one who lived within reach of the armed peasantry, or of the exaggerated and still more frightful rumours that preceded their approach, or who had witnessed, as I had done, the terrific blaze of the almost nightly conflagrations, could get rid of the vague idea of danger which might arrive at any moment, especially to one notoriously and actively engaged in putting down the mischief. Our parish had remained, it is true, happily free from the contagion; still it raged all around, east, west, north, and south; we were on a well-frequented highway, almost at the very point where four roads met, and the mobs travelled so far and so fast, that there was no telling at what hour or from what point of the compass our quiet village might be invaded.

Just as thoughts like these were beginning to traverse the blissful thoughtlessness of my reverie, a noise of shouting voices and rushing feet from the end of the street struck my ear. Dash started up instantly, and I was preparing to ring the bell and to be frightened, when a sound, well known to each of us, pacified us both. Dash, who is a superb old English spaniel, gave his magnificent ears a mighty shake; and making his accustomed three turns on the hearth-rug, lay down be-

fore the fire; and I, with a strangely modified feeling, alarm subsiding into amazed curiosity, proceeded to the door to examine into the cause of the uproar.

The sound which produced this consolatory effect was the well-known and peculiar whistle of Master Ben Emery,—a sound which, while it gave token of every variety of boyish mischief, was yet a most comfortable assurance against any thing worse.

Young Master Ben was one of those truly English personages, who, even in boyhood, show token of the character that is to be-a humourist in embryo, an oddity, a wag. His father was a better sort of labourer, a kind of bailiff or upper man in the service of a neighbouring farmer, and had brought up a large family honestly and creditably. All of these were now happily out of the way,—some at service, some in business, some married, and some dead,—with the exception of Benjamin, the youngest born, his mother's darling and plague. Ben was not as a mother's darling often is—a His carrotty locks forbade any claim to that title, though he had the lively blue eye and pleasant smile which so often accompany that complexion, and cause a general resemblance, a kind of family likeness between red-haired people. In person he was a thin, stunted, dwarfish boy of fourteen, small and light enough to pass for ten, who made use of his actual age to evade a longer attendance at the charity school, the master of

which, a dull personage no way fit to cope with Ben's biting jests, acquiescing in the young gentleman's own account of his scholarship purely to get rid of him; whilst his smallness of size and look of youth and debility he turned to account in another way, pleading his deficiency in bulk and stature and general weakness and delicacy as a reason for not going to work at the farm with his father, whose master had consented to employ him to drive the team. He weakly! Why in play or in mischief he was a pocket Hercules! has beaten big Bob the blacksmith at quoits; and thrown Titus Penwyn, the Cornish boy, in wrestling. Delicate! why if the sun or the world would but have stood still for the time, there is no doubt but he could have played at cricket for eight and forty hours running, without requiring more pause than the usual fifteen minutes between the innings. No exercise that bore the name of sport was too much for him; sheer labour was another matter.

Not only did he plead weakness and delicacy to escape the promotion of plough-boy at farmer Brooke's, but when hired by his father to keep Master Simmons's sheep,—an employment that seemed made for him, inasmuch as there was for ten hours in the day nothing to do but to lie on a bank and practise a certain pastoral flageolet with which he used to go too-tooing through the village,—he contrived to get dismissed in three days

for incapacity and contumacy; and even when proffered by his mother to look after her croney dame Welles's Welsh cow, an animal famous for getting out of bounds, not for the lucre of gain, but simply, as she expressed it, to keep both the creatures out of mischief, his services were rejected by the prudent dame with the observation, that obstropulous and wild as her beast might be, Ben was incomparably the most unmanageable of the two—a proof of bad reputation which so enraged his father, that he only escaped a sound flogging by climbing up a tree like a squirrel, and sleeping all night in the coppice amidst the fern and the bushes.

It was the very day after this misadventure, that Ben contrived to attach himself to our little establishment as a sort of help to our boy John. How he managed nobody can tell, for all the house knew him and his character, and every body in it held him for the very incarnation of mischief; but here he is, in prime favour with every one, not regularly paid and hired to be sure, but receiving sufficient and comfortable wages in the shape of pretty constant dinners and suppers, frequent largesses of sixpences and shillings, and occasional doles of wearing apparel. I question whether he be not more expensive to our small household than that model of a boy John, himself. Having said this, it is but right to add that he is nearly as useful in his own wild way; will do any thing on earth that he thinks can serve or

please, especially if he be not ordered to do it (for he has a Sir-John-Falstaff-like aversion to compulsion); makes himself in one way or other agreeable to the whole family—always excepting a certain under-maid called Betsy, against whom he has a spite; and although renowned all over the parish for story-telling, a peccadillo which I really believe he cannot help, never takes any of us in (for we know him so well that we never dream of believing him), unless now and then when he happens to speak truth, which has the same effect in deceiving his hearers as falsehood from other people.

We keep Ben because we like him. Why he came to us, heaven knows! Perhaps for the same reason; perhaps to avoid the flogging which roosting in the coppice had delayed, but not averted; perhaps attracted by a clever jay of mine, now, alas! no more—a bird of great accomplishment, and almost as saucy as himself; perhaps for the chance of handling a certain gun which he had seen John cleaning, an implement of noise and mischief that just suits his fancy, and which he brandishes of a night about the garden, pretending to hear thieves; perhaps to ride a fine young horse of our's which nobody else can ride, for he is an excellent horseman, and with his quick wit and light weight, seems born for a jockey; perhaps, and this is the likeliest cause of all, to have opportunity for playing tricks on poor Betsy, whom neither I nor my maid Anne, and I

believe she tries all in her power, can protect from his elvish machinations. But that very day had he spoilt my dinner (most unintentionally as far as his design went) by throwing a snow-ball at her as she stood by the kitchen fire, which, from her suddenly starting aside to avoid the missile, alighted on the back of a fowl in the act of being roasted, which was thereby rendered totally uneatable. This feat had, of course, brought him into great disgrace in the lower regions; and since half-past five, when the misadventure took place, nothing had been seen or heard of the young gentleman till now that his repeated and well-known whistle gave token of his vicinity.

Immediately after Ben's whistle, another sound was heard in the melée rising amidst the tramp of feet bounding along the frosty path from which the snow had been swept, the shouts and cries of children escaping and pursued, and the distant tinkling of a bell,—another well-known sound, the loud, gruff, angry voice of Master Clarke, the parish beadle.

This worthy functionary was a person who, an enemy to mischievous boys, by virtue of his office, had contrived to render his post and his person peculiarly obnoxious to that small rabble of the village, of whom Ben might be considered the ringleader, by a sour stern severity of aspect and character, an unrelenting aversion to frolic or pastime of any sort, and an alacrity

in pursuing and punishing the unhappy culprits, which came in strong contrast with his usual stolid slowness of act and word. Of course, Master Clarke could not fail to be unpopular; and the mingled noises of his voice and of the bell reminded me that that very morning he had been to our house to inform his Worship that every night, as soon as he sat down to supper, his shop-bell had been rung and rung, not by profitable customers, but by some invisible enemies, boys of course, whom he was determined to catch, if catch he could, and to punish with all the severity of his rod of office. His Worship, an indulgent and kindly personage, heard his complaints, and smiled and shook his head, and even threw away upon him a little of that unprofitable commodity called good advice!-" Boys will be boys, Master Clarke," said he: "you were one once, and so was I. Better leave the bell unanswered for a night or two; take no notice, and depend on it they'll soon tire of their frolic."

This recollection, which came across me as I passed from the door of the parlour to the door of the hall, completely enlightened me as to the cause of the uproar; and I was prepared to see, by the pale cold dim snow-light Master Clarke, with a screaming struggling urchin in either hand, (little Dick Wilson, poor fellow! who has but just donned the doublet and hose, and Sam Sewell, who is still in petticoats,) in full chase of the

larger fry who were flying before his fury, whilst Master Ben was lying perdu in a corner of our court, under shadow of the wall which he had contrived to leap or to scramble over. The sound of the distant ringing seemed to augment with every stride that Master Clarke took, who, half maddened with that noise, and with a sudden whistle which Ben again sent forth from his hidingplace under the wall, suddenly abandoned his pursuit, and was making for our gate, when all at once the man -one of the largest proportions, colossal, gigantic!seemed pulled back with a mighty jerk by some invisible cause, and was laid prostrate and sprawling in the snowy kennel. Ben jumped on the wall, the better to survey and laugh at him, as Puck might have done at Bottom, and the rest of the crew dancing with shouts of triumph round their fallen enemy, like the make-believe fairies round Falstaff in the guise of Herne the Hunter. The cause of this downfall was soon discovered to be a strong cord tied at one end to Master Clarke's coat, at the other to the bell at his shop door—but how fastened, or by whom, this deponent saith not. Betsy, indeed, avers, that the cord much resembles one which she herself missed that very evening from John and Ben's bedstead; and the beadle hath his own suspicions; but as no certain proof could be obtained, Master Ben hath escaped scot-free.

## THE LOST KEYS,

OR A DAY OF DISTRESS.

It was a glorious June morning; and I got up gay and bright, as the Americans say, to breakfast in the pretty summer-room overlooking the garden, which, built partly for my accommodation and partly for that of my geraniums, who make it their winter residence, is as regularly called the green-house as if I and my several properties-sofas, chairs, tables, chiffonières, and ottomans -did not inhabit it during the whole of the fine season; or as if it were not in its own person a well-proportioned and spacious apartment, no otherways to be distinguished from common drawing-rooms than by being nearly fronted with glass, about which out-of-door myrtles, passion-flowers, clematis, and the Persian honeysuckle, form a most graceful and varied frame-work, not unlike the festoons of flowers and foliage which one sees round some of the scarce and high-priced tradesmen's cards, and ridotto tickets of Hogarth and Bartolozzi.

Large glass folding-doors open into the little garden, almost surrounded by old buildings of the most picturesque form—the buildings themselves partly hidden by clustering vines, and my superb bay-tree, its shining leaves glittering in the sun on one side, whilst a tall pear-tree, garlanded to the very top with an English honevsuckle in full flower, breaks the horizontal line of the low cottage-roof on the other; the very pear-tree being, in its own turn, half concealed by a splendid pyramid of geraniums erected under its shade. geraniums! It does not become us poor mortals to be vain-but really, my geraniums! There is certainly nothing but the garden into which Aladdin found his way, and where the fruit was composed of gems, that can compare with them. This pyramid is undoubtedly the great object from the green-house; but the common flower-beds which surround it, filled with roses of all sorts, and lilies of all colours, and pinks of all patterns, and campanulas of all shapes, to say nothing of the innumerable tribes of annuals, of all the outlandish names that ever were invented, are not to be despised even beside the gorgeous exotics, which, arranged with the nicest attention to colour and form, so as to combine the mingled charms of harmony and contrast, seem to look down proudly on their humble compeers.

No pleasanter place for a summer breakfast—always a pretty thing, with its cherries, and strawberries, and vol. v.

its affluence of nosegays and posies-no pleasanter place for a summer breakfast-table than my green-house! And no pleasanter companion, with whom to enjoy it. than the fair friend, as bright as a rose-bud, and as gav as a lark—the saucy, merry, charming Kate, who was waiting to partake our country fare. The birds were singing in the branches; bees, and butterflies, and myriads of gay happy insects were flitting about in the flower-beds; the haymakers were crowding to their light and lively labour in a neighbouring meadow; whilst the pleasant smell of the newly-mown grass was blended with that of a bean-field in full blossom still nearer, and with the thousand odours of the gardenso that sight, and sound, and smell, were a rare compound of all that is delightful to the sense and the feeling.

Nor were higher pleasures wanting. My pretty friend, with all her vivacity, had a keen relish of what is finest in literature and in poetry. An old folio edition of that volume of Dryden called his "Fables," which contains the glorious rifacimenti of parts of Chaucer, and the best of his original poems, happened to be on the table; the fine description of Spring in the opening of the Flower and the Leaf, led to the picture of Eden in the Paradise Lost, and that again to Comus, and Comus to Fletcher's Faithful Shepherdess, and Fletcher's Faithful Shepherdess to Shakspeare, and As

You Like It. The bees and the butterflies, culling for pleasure or for thrift the sweets of my geraniums, were but types of Kate Leslie and myself roving amidst the poets. This does not sound much like a day of distress; but the evil is to come.

A gentle sorrow did arrive, all too soon, in the shape of Kate Leslie's poney-phaeton, which whisked off that charming person as fast as her two long-tailed Arabians could put their feet to the ground. This evil had, however, substantial consolation in the promise of another visit very soon; and I resumed, in peace and quietness, the usual round of idle occupation which forms the morning employment of a country gentlewoman of small fortune: ordered dinner-minced-veal, cold ham, a currant-pudding, and a salad—if any body happens to be curious on the score of my housekeeping; renewed my beau-pots; watered such of my plants as wanted most; mended my gloves; patted Dash; looked at the Times; and was just sitting down to work, or to pretend to work, when I was most pleasantly interrupted by the arrival of some morning visiters-friends from a distance-for whom, after a hearty welcome and some cordial chat, I ordered luncheon, with which order my miseries began.

"The keys, if you please ma'am, for the wine and the Kennet ale," said Anne, my female factotum, who rules, as regent, not only the cook and the under-maid and the boy, but the whole family, myself included, and is an actual housekeeper in every respect except that of keeping the keys. "The keys, ma'am, if you please," said Anne; and then I found that my keys were not in my right hand pocket, where they ought to have been, nor in my left hand pocket, where they might have been, nor in either of my apron-pockets, nor in my work-basket, nor in my reticule—in short that my keys were lost!

Now these keys were only two in number, and small enough in dimensions; but then the one opened that important part of me, my writing-desk; and the other contained within itself the specific power over every lock in the house, being no other than the key of the key-drawer; and no chance of picking them-for alas! alas! the locks were Bramah's! So, after a few exclamations, such as, What can have become of my keys? Has any one seen my keys? Somebody must have run away with my keys!-I recollected that, however consolatory to myself such lamentations might be, they would by no means tend to quench the thirst of my guests. I applied myself vigorously to remedy the evil all I could by applications to my nearest neighbours (for time was pressing, and our horse and his master out for the day) to supply, as well as might be, my deficiency. Accordingly I sent to the public-house for their best beer, which, not being Kennet ale, would not go down; and to the good humoured wives of the shoemaker and the baker for their best wine. Fancy to yourselves a decanter of damson wine arriving from one quarter, and a jug of parsnip wine, fresh from the wood, tapped on purpose, from the other! And this for drinkers of Burgundy and Champaigne! Luckily the water was good, and my visiters were goodnatured, and comforted me in my affliction, and made a jest of the matter. Really they are a nice family, the Sumners, especially the two young men, to whom I have, they say, taught the taste of spring-water.

This trouble passed over lightly enough. But scarcely were they gone before the tax-gatherer came for money—locked up in my desk! What will the collector say?—And the justice's clerk for warrants, left under my care by the chairman of the bench, and also safely lodged in the same safe repository. What will their worships say to this delinquency? It will be fortunate if they do not issue a warrant against me in my own person! My very purse was left by accident in that unlucky writing-desk; and when our kind neighbours, the Wrights, sent a melon, and I was forced to borrow a shilling to give the messenger, I could bear my loss no longer, and determined to institute a strict search on the instant.

But before the search could begin in came the pretty little roly-poly Sydneys and Murrays, brats from seven downwards, with their whole train of nurses, and nursery-maids, and nursery-governesses, by invitation, to eat strawberries; and the strawberries were locked up in a cupboard, the key of which was in the unopenable drawer! And good farmer Brookes, he too called, sent by his honour for a bottle of Hollands—the right Schiedam; and the Schiedam was in the cellar; and the key of the cellar was in the Bramah-locked drawer! And the worthy farmer, who behaved charmingly for a man deprived of his gin, was fain to be content with excuses, like a voter after an election; and the poor children were compelled to put up with promises, like a voter before one; to be sure, they had a few pinks and roses to sweeten their disappointment; but the strawberries were as uncomeatable as the Schiedam.

At last they were gone; and then began the search in good earnest. Every drawer, not locked, every room that could be entered, every box that could be opened, was ransacked over and over again for these intolerable keys.

All my goods and chattels were flung together in heaps, and then picked over (a process which would make even new things seem disjointed and shabby), and the quantities of trumpery thereby disclosed, especially in the shape of thimbles, needle-cases, pincushions, and scissars, from the different work-baskets, work-boxes, and work-bags (your idle person always abounds in working materials,) were astounding. I think there

were seventeen pincushions of different patterns—beginning with an old boot and ending with a new guitar. But what was there not? It seemed to me that there were pocketable commodities enough to furnish a second-hand bazaar! Every thing was there except my keys.

For four hours did I and my luckless maidens perambulate the house, whilst John, the boy, examined the garden; until we were all so tired that we were forced to sit down from mere weariness. Saving always the first night of one of my tragedies, when, though I pique myself on being composed, I can never manage to sit still; except on such an occasion, I do not think I ever walked so much at one time in my life. At last I flung myself on a sofa in the green-house, and began to revolve the possibility of their being still in the place where I had first missed them.

A jingle in my apron-pocket afforded some hope, but it turned out to be only the clinking of a pair of gardenscissars against his old companion, a silver pencil-case—and that prospect faded away. A slight opening in Dryden's heavily-bound volume gave another glimmer of sunshine, but it proved to be occasioned by a sprig of myrtle in Palamon and Arcite—Kate Leslie's elegant mark.

This circumstance recalled the recollection of my pretty friend. Could she have been the culprit? And

I began to ponder over all the instances of unconscious key-stealing that I had heard of amongst my acquaint-How my old friend, Aunt Martha, had been so well known for that propensity as to be regularly sought after whenever keys were missing; and my young friend, Edward Harley, from the habit of twisting something round his fingers during his eloquent talk (people used to provide another eloquent talker, Madame de Staël, with a willow-twig for the purpose), had once caught up and carried away a key, also a Bramah, belonging to a lawyer's bureau, thereby, as the lawyer affirmed, causing the loss of divers lawsuits to himself and his clients. Neither Aunt Martha nor Edward had been near the place; but Kate Leslie might be equally subject to absent fits, and might, in a paroxysm, have abstracted my keys; at all events it was worth trying. So I wrote her a note to go by post in the evening (for Kate, I grieve to say, lives above twenty miles off) and determined to await her reply, and think no more of my calamity.

A wise resolution! but, like many other wise resolves, easier made than kept. Even if I could have forgotten my loss, my own household would not have let me.

The cook, with professional callousness, came to demand sugar for the currant-pudding—and the sugar was in the store-room—and the store-room was locked; and

scarcely had I recovered from this shock before Anne came to inform me that there was no oil in the cruet, and that the flask was in the cellar, snugly reposing, I suppose, by the side of the Schiedam, so that if for weariness I could have eaten, there was no dinner to eat—for without the salad who would might take the meat! However, I being alone, this signified little; much less than a circumstance of which I was reminded by my note to Kate Leslie, namely, that in my desk were two important letters, one triple, and franked for that very night; as well as a corrected proof-sheet, for which the press was waiting; and that all these despatches were to be sent off by post that evening.

Roused by this extremity, I carried my troubles and my writing-desk to my good friend the blacksmith—a civil intelligent man, who sympathised with my distress, sighed, shook his head, and uttered the word Bramah!—and I thought my perplexity was nearly at its height, when, as I was wending slowly homeward, my sorrows were brought to a climax by my being overtaken by one of the friends whom I admire and honour most in the world—a person whom all the world admires—who told me, in her prettiest way, that she was glad to see me so near my own gate, for that she was coming to drink tea with me.

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Here was a calamity! The Lady Mary H., a professed tea-drinker—a green-tea-drinker, one (it was a

point of sympathy between us) who took nothing but tea and water, and, therefore, required that gentle and lady-like stimulant in full perfection. Lady Mary come to drink tea with me; and I with nothing better to offer her than tea from the shop—the village-shop—bohea, or souchong, or whatever they might call the vile mixture. Tea from the shop for Lady Mary! Ill luck could go no further: it was the very extremity of small distress.

Her ladyship is, however, as kind as she is charming, and bore our mutual misfortune with great fortitude; admired my garden, praised my geraniums, and tried to make me forget my calamity. Her kindness was thrown away. I could not even laugh at myself, or find beauty in my flowers, or be pleased with her for flattering them. I tried, however, to do the honours by my plants; and, in placing a large night-scented stock, which was just beginning to emit its odour, upon the table, I struck against the edge, and found something hard under my belt.

"My keys! my keys!" cried I, untying the ribbon, and half laughing with delight, as I heard a most pleasant jingle on the floor; and the lost keys, sure enough, they were; deposited there, of course, by my own hand; unfelt, unseen, and unsuspected, during our long and weary search. Since the adventure of my dear friend, Mrs. S., who hunted a whole morning for her spectacles

whilst they were comfortably perched upon her nose, I have met with nothing so silly and so perplexing.

But my troubles were over—my affliction was at an end.

The strawberries were sent to the dear little girls; and the Schiedam to the good farmer; and the warrants to the clerk. The tax-gatherer called for his money; letters and proof went to the post; and never in my life did I enjoy a cup of Twining's green tea so much as the one which Lady Mary and I took together after my day of distress.

### THE RESIDUARY LEGATEE.

A TRUE STORY.

Above half a century ago-for to such a date does my little story refer-Red Lion Square was accounted a genteel, if not a fashionable, place of residence, and numbered amongst its inhabitants some of the principal London attorneys—solicitor was not the phrase in those days—to whom its vicinity to the inns of court rendered that neighbourhood particularly convenient. Amongst the most respectable of these respectable persons was Mr. Mordaunt, a widower with five children, whose mingled strength and kindliness of character rendered him the very man to educate and bring out his motherless family; just as the union of acuteness and integrity, for which he was distinguished in his professional life, had placed him deservedly at the head of one of the most flourishing firms in the metropolis. He was not rich, for he had begun the world with nothing but industry and talent, had married a lady in the same predicament with himself, and had preferred giving his children the inalienable possession of an excellent education to the accumulation of money for their immediate portions; but, in the prime of life, with an excellent income and still brighter prospects, he lived as became a man of liberal habits and elegant tastes; and generous, both from temper and principle, refused no indulgence to his family, except such as appeared to him inconsistent with their station, or with that wise and liberal economy which is as essential, perhaps even more so, to the affluent as to the poor.

The young people were all of high promise. The eldest, Frank, a youth of extraordinary ability, bringing up to the bar, was on the point of leaving Oxford, where he had distinguished himself greatly, and had recently been entered at the Temple. William, the second son, was in his father's office: and of the three daughters, Catherine, the elder, a girl of eighteen, was eminently pretty; Sarah, two years younger, and less handsome, had something of her brother Frank's talent; and little Barbara, the pet and plaything of the whole house, was that charming creature—a lively and good-humoured spoilt child.

One evening, in the beginning of July, this amiable family were assembled in their pretty drawing-room, fresh hung with India paper, where gorgeous birds were perched amongst gorgeous flowers, and Chinese processions, gorgeous and immoveable as the flowers or the birds, stuck amidst gay pagodas and gilded temples—a bright but unmeaning pageant. The furniture consisted of high bottomed French chairs and settees covered with blue damask, at once handsome and uncomfortable, with window-curtains to match; a japan cabinet; a mahogany bureau, of which the top formed a small bookcase with glass doors; a harpsichord—for pianos were not yet in use; two large looking-glasses between the windows, and marble tables with gilt legs underneath them; a Pembroke table in the middle of the room, and a large fire-screen, with a stupendous bunch of flowers in embroidery, the elaborate work of the fair Catherine, in one corner.

Mr. Mordaunt was writing a letter at one table; his eldest daughter working, or, to use her brother's phrase, flourishing, an apron at another; the young men were lounging at the windows; and Bab (for the dignity of that aristocratic name, so often seen in the peerage, and so seldom elsewhere, was in this young lady's case sadly pretermitted—the very housemaid who dressed her called her Miss Bab) was playing with her doll on the floor.

Sarah's employment was different from the rest. She was standing at the harpsichord, busied in arranging, in China vases, a quantity of flowers with which it was strewed, and which had just arrived from a small

country house, which Mr. Mordaunt called his farm, on Enfield Chase. With intuitive taste Sarah had put the honeysuckles, so pretty by themselves and which mix so ill with gayer flowers, in a large jar on the centre of the mantle-piece, flanking it with a smaller pot filled with white Provence roses—so elegant and delicate amongst their own green leaves—on one side, and another pot of that rose called the maiden's blush on the side opposite; whilst the rest of the old-fashioned bouquet, pinks, lilies, larkspurs, sweet-williams, and sweet-peas, she gathered together in a large China bowl, and deposited on the harpsichord between a pile of music-books and a guitar-case.

"How I wish these flowers had arrived before poor Mrs. Sullivan went away!" exclaimed Sarah, after standing before them for some minutes to survey and admire her own handywork. "She seemed so out of spirits—poor woman!—and some of these beautiful roses would have comforted her and done her good; at least," added she, seeing her elder brother smile and shake his head, "I am sure they would always have cheered me, let me be as melancholy as I might; and she is as fond of flowers as I am, and was always used to them in her father's fine garden."

"Kindness must always do good under any form, my dear Sarah," observed her father, looking up from his letter; "but I fear that poor Mrs. Sullivan's depres-



sion is too deeply seated to be touched by your pretty remedy, and that any thing which reminds her of her father's house is more likely to increase than to remove her dejection."

- " Mr. Darrell, then, continues implacable?" inquired Frank, with much interest.
- "Yes," replied Mr. Mordaunt, "and I fear will remain so. I am writing to him now in his daughter's behalf, but I have no hope of any good result. He sent for my partner yesterday to make his will, evidently to avoid my importunity in favour of these poor Sullivans. Her elopement was a most foolish act—a wrong, as well. as foolish act; but ten years of penitence and suffering might have softened my old friend towards his only child, and one who, spoilt by his indulgence and her own position in society—a beauty and an heiress—can so ill support the penury and neglect under which she now languishes."
- "Was she beautiful?" asked Catherine: "I see no remains of former loveliness."
- "She is much changed," answered Frank; "but even I can remember her a most splendid woman. She had the presence and air of a queen, or rather of a young lady's notion of a queen. Fancy a stately and magnificent creature, with high features; a dark, clear, colourless complexion; a proud, curling lip; large black eyes—sometimes soft and languishing, but which could

light up with a fire as bright as the glow of a furnace; a broad, smooth forehead; a dark, flexible brow; and a smile exquisitely sweet, and you will have some idea of Sophia Darrell before her imprudent and unfortunate marriage. Poverty and her father's displeasure have wrought this change, and perhaps her husband's death."

"Chiefly want of money," observed Mr. Mordaunt, sealing and directing his letter. "She had pretty well got over the loss of Captain Sullivan. Want of money is the pressing evil."

"I wish I were as rich as Mr. Darrell!" cried Sarah; and then she blushed and stopped, adding, in a hesitating voice, "what a pity it is that good wishes can do no real good!"

"Except to the wisher, Sarah," replied her father: "the slightest emotion of disinterested kindness that passes through the mind improves and refreshes that mind, producing generous thought and noble feeling, as the sun and rain foster your favourite flowers. Cherish kind wishes, my children; for a time may come when you may be enabled to put them in practice. In the mean while," added he, in a gayer tone, "tell me if you were all very rich, what you would wish for yourselves—for your own gratification, ladies and gentlemen?"

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<sup>&</sup>quot;Oh, papa," exclaimed Sarah, "a great library!"

<sup>&</sup>quot;And I," said Miss Bab, from the floor, "I'd have a great doll."

- " I'd go to Italy," said Frank.
- " I to Oxford," cried his brother.
- "And I to Ranelagh," said Catherine, laughing. "In the mean time," added she, as the footman—it being now six o'clock, for they had dined at the then usual hour of three—brought in the tea equipage, followed by the silver kettle and lamp:—"In the mean time, we may as well go to tea, and afterwards take a walk in Gray's Inn Garden as we meant to do, for the evening is beautiful, and my new hat is just come home."

About two months after, the same party, with the exception of Mr. Mordaunt, were assembled at nearly the same hour in a very different scene. They were then passing the long vacation at the farm, and, it being Bab's birthday, had adjourned to the root-house, a pretty rustic building at the end of the garden, to partake of fruit, and cakes, and a syllabub from the cow, which the enchanted little girl had been permitted to compound herself, under the direction and superintendence of the housekeeper. It was a scene beautiful in itself, and full of youthful enjoyment. The somewhat sombre root-house, with its Gothic painted windows, its projecting thatch, supported by rough pillars clothed with ivy, clematis, passion-flowers, and the virgin-inthe-bower, looked out on a garden, gay with hollyhocks, balsams, China asters, African marigolds, the rich scarlet geranium, and the sweet marvel of Peru. The evening sun gleamed brightly around, shining on the old farm-house, whose casement windows peeped, through a clustering vine, on a small piece of water at the end of the garden, and the green common and forest beyond, with an effect of light and shadow, just, as Sarah observed, "like a real picture;" and the figures scattered about would have pleased a painter's eye almost as well as the landscape in which they were placed.

Catherine, radiant with innocent gaiety, blooming as Hebe, and airy as a sylph, stood catching, in a wicker basket, the large bunches of grapes which her younger brother, with one foot on a ladder, and one on the steep roof of the house, threw down to her and Frank, who was at once steadying the ladder and directing the steps of the adventurous gatherer. Little Bab, the heroine of the day, was marching in great state down a broad gravel walk, leading from the house to the root-house, preceding a procession consisting of John, the footman, with a tray of jingling spoons and glasses—the housekeeper, bearing the famous syllabub, her own syllabub -and the housemaid, well laden with fruit and cakes. Sarah, faithful to her flowers, was collecting an autumn nosegay-cloves, jessamine, blossomed myrtle, mignionette, and the late musk-rose-partly as an offering to Miss Barbara—partly for her father, whose return from town, whither he had been summoned on business, was anxiously expected by them all.

Just as the young people were collected together in the root-house, Mr. Mordaunt arrived. He was in deep mourning, and although receiving with kindness Sarah's offering of flowers, and Bab's bustling presentation of a glass of syllabub, which the little lady of the day insisted on filling herself, was evidently serious, preoccupied, almost agitated. He sat down without speaking, throwing his hat upon the table, and pushing away Catherine's guitar, which had been brought thither purposely to amuse him. He had even forgotten that it was poor Bab's birth-day, until reminded of it by the child herself, who clambered upon his knees, put her arms round his neck, and demanded clamorously that her dear papa should kiss her and wish her joy. then kissed her tenderly, uttered a fervent benediction on her, and on all his children, and relapsed into his former silence and abstraction.

At length he said, "My sadness saddens you, my dear boys and girls, but I am just come from a very solemn scene, from Mr. Darrell's funeral."

- "Gracious Heaven!" exclaimed Frank with much emotion: "I did not even know that he was dead."
- "Nor I, till I reached London yesterday," returned Mr. Mordaunt.
- "Poor Mrs. Sullivan!" cried Sarah: "did her father forgive her before he died?"
  - "He sent her his forgiveness on his death-bed-an

unspeakable comfort!-but still his angry will remains unrevoked. She and her children are starving, whilst his immense fortune descends to one unconnected with him by blood or alliance, or any tie save that of an old friendship. After a few trifling bequests to friends and and servants, I am left residuary legatee. The property is large, my children; larger, perhaps, than with your moderate views and limited expectations you can readily apprehend. You may be rich, even beyond the utmost grasp of your wishes, and Catherine may revel in innocent amusement, and Frank in tasteful travel; college with all its advantages is open to his brother; Sarah may have endless books, and Barbara countless dolls; luxury, splendour, gaiety, and ambition, are before ye-the trappings of grandeur or the delights of lettered ease; ye may be rich, my children, beyond the dreams of avarice—or ye may resign these riches to the natural heir, and return to peaceful competence and honourable exertion, reaping no other fruit from this unsought-for legacy than a spotless reputation and a clear conscience. Choose, and choose freely. My little Sarah has, I think, already, chosen. When, some weeks ago, she wished to be as rich as Mr. Darrell, I read her countenance ill, if the motive of that wish were not to enrich Mrs. Sullivan. Choose, my dear children, and choose freely!"

"Oh, my dear father, we have chosen! Could you



think that we should hesitate? I answer for my brothers and sisters, as for myself. How could *your* children waver between wealth and honour?" And Frank, as he said this, threw himself into his father's arms, the other young people clinging round them—even little Bab exclaiming, "Oh, dear papa, the money must be all for Mrs. Sullivan!"

The relator of this true anecdote had the gratification of hearing it from one of the actors in the scene—the Sarah of her little story, who is now in a green old age, the delight of her friends, and the admiration of her acquaintances. Her readers will probably be as glad to hear as she was, that the family, thus honourably self-deprived of enormous riches, has been eminently happy and prosperous in all its branches—that the firm distinguished by the virtues of its founder still continues one of the first in London—and that a grandson of Mr. Mordaunt's, no less remarkable for talent and integrity than his progenitor, is at the present time a partner in the house.

## THE RUNAWAY.

ONE of the most retired-looking spots in our thicklypeopled neighbourhood, is the pretty little nook called Sandleford Green; a small, very small patch of green sward, formed by a casual receding of the fields at a place where two narrow shady lanes cross each other, leaving just room enough in one angle for a clear mirror-like pond, with glorious old thorns dipping into it from the surrounding hedges, whilst a village pond inclosing a noble oak, occupies another corner, and a third is completely overshadowed by two large horse-chestnut trees standing like sentinels on either side of a gate, which leads through a short, deep lane to the only dwelling within sight or hearing. No spot is, apparently, so entirely out of the way and out of the world, as Sandleford Green! And yet the well-beaten footpaths, two or three of which striking in different directions across the fields met in this spot as a common centre, intimated that the little Green was a place of some resort, as in-

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deed it actually was, not so much as a thoroughfare, but from its own independent attraction. The one solitary and unostentatious tenement of which it boasted, being famous all through the county for its home-brewed ale; the fine Sandleford beer, most emphatically called strong, holding so high a rank amongst the consumers of that formidable beverage, that people sent for it far and near; and the liveried grooms of two or three neighbouring squires might often be seen galloping on their thoroughbred hunters to seek this only liquor worthy to wash down their master's Stilton, at the same moment that poor Dame Wheeler's little girl was crossing the stile for her sick grandmother's daily half-pint; whilst half the rustics in the parish were pouring in from north, south, east, and west, to enjoy in Joseph Dobson's own tap-room, or beneath his honeysuckled-porch, their own less moderate potations. "First come first served," was Joseph's motto, and although our rural Boniface was on the whole a man of impartiality, it is doubtful whether he had not some pleasure in keeping the lacqueys in attendance, and the grandees whom they served in expectation, whilst he administered to the wants of his humbler and more sociable customers. A chuckling, bustling, merry knave was our landlord, and a freespoken; had a vote for the county, which he regularly bestowed on the opposition candidate, be the ministers whom they might, (Joseph thought no honest man could ever vote

for any ministry, that was his creed;) owed no one a shilling; and was too confident in the power of his ale to have any dread of the magistrates and the License Act:—"Old Sir Thomas can't finish his dinner without a glass of my beer," thought Joseph; "and I may be as saucy and independent as I please."

Whatever might be the merits of the Sandleford ale, of which I confess myself nowise qualified to judge, holding beer in all its varieties as an abomination even more flagrant than the other detestable drinkable called wine,—whatever might be the charms of Joseph's beverage, there could be no question as to the beauty and picturesqueness of his habitation.

It was a high, narrow, tower-like house, with chimneys like turrets, and every sort of gable-end and inequality of which a building is capable, harmonised and enriched by an old vine, which after creeping up one side of the house nearly covered the roof, garlanding the very chimneys, and wreathing its luxuriant abundance of leaf and fruit and tendril wherever a shoot could find place, until it fairly hung over on the other side—until its rich festoons nearly met the branchy honeysuckle, (Milton's "twisted eglantine,") which climbing up, shaded a rude, but fanciful and airy porch, such as is often seen in Wouverman's pictures, adding grace and lightness even to them. Nor was the garden which reached on one side to a small meandering brook, the

large garden, full of beds of vegetables and berry bushes, almost hidden by wide flower-borders, very nicely kept; or the long strip of beautiful green sward, the meadow, orchard, or pleasure ground (for it might pass for either of these), with its fine grove of old fruit trees, pear, plum, cherry and apple, terminated by its smooth bowling-green and goodly arbour, at all unworthy of the picturesque dwelling to which they were appended. The territory behind, a miniature farm yard, with stabling for two, cart-room for one, a commodious cowshed, and pigsties, goose-houses, and hen-houses out of number, its populous duck pond, and its abundance of noises,-horses neighing, cows lowing, calves bleating, pigs grunting, geese gabbling, ducks quacking, cocks crowing, hens cackling, and doves cooing-was also a lively stirring scene, especially when animated by the presence of mine host, portly, sturdy and comely, an excellent representative of his own brown stout, with twenty pigeons fluttering about him (for Joseph, amongst other fancies, was a great pigeon fancier), and two or three pet tumblers or fantails perched on his shoulder. In short, every thing about the place, from the two rosy smiling lasses, his daughters, down to the fat yard dog and sleek tabby cat, seemed emblems of rural plenty and English independence; meet appendages to the sign of the Foaming Tankard, which swung in creaking magnificence from a post in front of the dwelling.

By far the most interesting inmate, however, of this small village hostelry, was one, whose whole appearance formed the strongest possible contrast to the rest of that flourishing establishment. Mary Walker, the only child of the good landlord's only sister, was a tall thin young woman, with a pale, mild, serious countenance, great simplicity of dress and manner, and a general delicacy both of look and demeanour, belonging partly perhaps to ill health, but so much connected with a natural elegance of mind, that it hushed even her boisterous uncle, and his boisterous customers, into something like gentleness; just as the presence of a born gentlewoman might have done, if it were possible to fancy a born gentlewoman seated in the tap-room of the Foaming Tankard.

To say truth, the tap-room was a place that Mary seldom visited. The noise, the talking, the singing, the smell of tobacco, or even the odour of the famous Sandleford beer, would have kept her from that well-frequented resort of the thirsty souls of the village, even if the dread of encountering some of her many lovers (for Mary had as many suitors as Penelope) had not been sufficient to hinder her from putting her foot across the threshold.

The cause of Mary Walker's many conquests might be found, perhaps, (at least *she* certainly thought so) in the circumstance of her being a rustic heiress, having just so many hundreds of pounds as made her a great match in her own degree; the cause of her being, at two and twenty, unwedded, and unlikely to wed, will take rather more telling, although the story be short enough, and common enough too.

Joseph Dobson had had a son, called William, as unlike his father as possible; a gay, lively, mercurial spirit, too quick, or as his poor mother used to say, too clever to learn, too ready at many trades to stick steadily to one; and so full of varying schemes and changeful resources, that every body except that doting mother felt convinced, that in spite of William's acknowledged talent, his destiny would prove unprosperous.

The only chance for its being otherwise, lay in his strong affection for his fair cousin, Mary Walker. Her influence over him, especially after the death of his fond but misjudging mother, who had fostered his wild and expensive habits, by supplying him with money for their indulgence, formed the only counteraction to his natural and acquired unsteadiness of character. Even his father, although knowing him best and fearing him most, looked forward with some degree of hope to the period when he should be quietly married to Mary; and she herself (how strange it is, that the mildest and most reflective woman should be so often carried off her feet by the giddiest wild-goose of a man!) she

herself idolised him; overturned all the disinterested objections of her uncle and guardian, to risking her money and her happiness with so flighty a swain, and even laid aside much of her own timidity to hasten, as far as her natural modesty would permit, the proposed union.

On the very evening before the intended marriage, William, who amongst his other caprices, was frequently subject to the fury of jealousy, was seized with a violent fit of that amiable passion, the object being no other than George Bailey, my Lord's gamekeeper, as goodnatured a fellow as ever lived, and a constant visiter at the sign of the Foaming Tankard. He had brought two tame pheasants, a cock and a hen, as a present to Mary, who was known to be fond of pet poultry; "a wedding present," as he had whispered at parting, and Mary unluckily had admired the beauty of the birds.

"You like the birds for the sake of the giver, Mary," said William, chafed at the warmth with which George had shaken hands with her in the moment of departure, and the mingled blush and smile with which she had received his whispered farewell; "you are thinking of the master's good looks, of his gay plumage, and not of the birds."

"The master thinks little of me, or I of him. You are quite mistaken as to both of us," replied Mary.

"You admire the beauty of the donor," pursued

William pertinaciously; "you talk of the pheasants, but you are thinking of him."

- " Not I, indeed!" exclaimed Mary.
- "But you are, I say, Madam," resumed William, with increasing violence. "George Bailey is the beau of the parish, as you are the belle. We all know that; and for my poor part, I think it a great pity that you should be separated."
- "If you think so, William," said poor Mary, and then, unable to finish the sentence, burst into tears.
  - "Well, madam, if I think so"-
- "Then—oh William! William! how cruel this is, when you know that I love you, and nobody but you, in this wide world!"
- "If I think so, madam, then—pray finish what you were going to say. There is nothing I hate so much as these sort of scenes."
- "Then," said Mary, resuming her firmness, "we had better part."
- "Certainly madam, we had better part, I agree with you perfectly," said the intended bridegroom, walking out of the house without listening to the threats of his father, the remonstrances of his sisters, or even the gentle assurances of Mary herself, that neither George Bailey nor she had ever thought of each other.

Joseph Dobson stormed, his little daughters fretted and wondered, and poor Mary cried; but all fully expected that that night at supper time, or at latest by peep of dawn, William would re-appear, repent, and be forgiven; for his temper, "which carried anger as the flint doth fire," had the redeeming grace of being eminently sweet and sunshiny, especially after one of these sudden storms; so that Mary, after feeling the exceeding delight of reconciliation, used sometimes to wonder whether she should like William as well, if he were always quiet and civil like other people. Mary cried, expecting to be comforted; but the comforter whom she expected did not arrive. The evening passed away—the night—the next morning, that which should have been the bridal morning !- the day-the intended wedding day! and still no tidings of William. His father traced him to London; and then came a report that he was gone on board ship; he had had such a fancy in his boyhood engendered by reading Robinson Crusoe; and then came rumours of shipwreck, at first doubtfully listened to, but gradually believed, as, month after month, and year after year glided by without any tidings arriving of the unhappy fugitive. Surely if he had been alive he would have written, was the secret thought and feeling of all.

In his own home, long absence had produced its usual effect, and things had returned to their ordinary course with little reference to the life or death of the young man. His father, first immoderately angry, then

intemperately grieved, had resumed his former jovial temper and bustling habits; his light-hearted sisters had ceased to hope or fear, or lament; and his old companions had well nigh forgotten that he had ever ex-Forgotten, indeed, he was by every body except poor Mary, who cherished his memory with the gentle sadness of a young widow, and turned from love and lovers with the fond fidelity of a turtle dove that has lost its mate. Never was heart more devoted and true: as Ben Brown, the fat exciseman, and Aaron Keep, the lean shoemaker, and tall Jem Ward, the blacksmith, and little Bob Wheatley, the carpenter, besides at least a score more of rejected suitors, could testify,-George Bailey being nearly the only young man in the parish who had never made Mary Walker an offer, having, within three months of the pheasant present, brought home a very sufficient reason for not doing so in the shape of an exceedingly pretty black-eyed wife. Poor Mary! she would have done wisely in following the example of the rest of the world, and forgetting William Dobson; but as she used to say, when urged on the subject, she could not.

Meanwhile, time rolled on, and it was now some years since any thing had been heard of him. May was drawing towards its close—that loveliest month, which joins the spring flowers with the summer leaves. The country was in its prime of beauty, and Sandleford Green, with its pearly bunches of hawthorn overhanging and reflected

in the clear bright pond, the horse chestnuts covered with their pyramidal flowers, the golden broom skirting round the meadows where the young lambs were at play, the orchard one glow of blossom, the lilacs and laburnums scenting the arbour, and the honeysuckle perfuming the porch.—Sandleford was the sweetest and prettiest of all country places; and Mary was standing under the honeysuckle, looking at the blue sky, and the green grass, and the flowery fruit trees so gay in the sunshine, and thinking how wrong it was in her not to be happy; when all on a sudden the good landlord advanced from the farm-yard with a troubled countenance, calling for Mary, and Bessy, and Kate, a mess of milk, a jug of ale, and a bottle of brandy. "There's a man lying dead or dying in the cart-house," added he; "make haste, lasses! make haste!"

Mary, catching at the hope of life, hurried into the house to despatch some messenger for medical advice; his daughters flew to his assistance, and half the customers in the tap-room followed with instinctive curiosity to the cart-house.

The man was not dead; and mine host and little Kate were administering, or rather offering (for he seemed incapable either of speaking or swallowing) their various remedies.

"Who can he be, father?" said Kate; "what can have brought him here?"

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"How should I know, child?" replied the man of the Tankard; "'tis a poor ragged, famished wretch, as you see, who I suppose could crawl no farther. But I think he'll live! He's looking about him! and he seems likely to come to. Get your cousin's smelling bottle, Bessy; and don't crowd round him so, good folks! Why even Lion has crept up to him, and is half smothering the poor wretch. That looks as if it was somebody the dog knew."

And the poor outcast, the sick, famished, ragged, perishing man, writhed on his straw, and groaned and gasped as if for speech.

"Where are Mary's salts, girls? See how Lion is licking the poor wretch's hands! Where is Mary?"

And at that instant Mary entered; the sick man half rose up, and she knew him! "William! gracious God! it is William!" And instantly she was kneeling at his side, and supporting him in her arms, aided, as it happened, by our old friend the keeper, who had been taking his morning draught in the tap. Poor William looked from one to the other—

- " Are you married?" said he, with a strong effort.
- "Yes," said George; "no," said Mary; both in a breath.
- "To think of my not knowing my own son!" exclaimed the father, bending over him, the tears running over his rough cheeks. "But his very mother could

not have known him, so fond of him as she used to be! Nobody would, but Mary. Welcome home, my boy! We'll soon set thee up again. Welcome, my own dear boy!"

"Welcome home, dear William!" echoed the sobbing sisters.

But William listened to none of them. "Are you married?" was again his question.

- " Yes!" said George, smiling.
- "But not to me, William! Not to me, dear William!" said Mary: and the poor runaway grasped her hand between his trembling ones (Lion fondling them all the time), and life, and health, and love, were in the pressure; and the toils, the wanderings, the miseries of his four years' absence, were all forgotten in that moment of bliss!

### CHRISTMAS AMUSEMENTS.

(No. III.)

On the whole the charades had gone off sufficiently well to induce a pretty general desire for a repetition of the same amusement. "Oh, yes," said Annie, when the question was started, "more charades, pray! more! more!" added she, dancing, and clapping her hands, like a child of four years old, when asking for another sugar-plum, or another story. "More! more!" cried Annie; and her brothers and sisters assented to her request, on condition that she herself took a part. "We want you, Annie," said Sophia; "we can't do without you; you must be my daughter." Annie demurred to this not a little.

" And laughed, and blushed, and oft did say Her pretty oath by yea and nay; She could not, would not, durst not play." At last, however, she relented, like her prototype, Lady Heron, conditioning in her turn that Mr. Mortimer should play too!—Every body was astounded, first, at the liberty, and then at the extreme discrepancy of so grave a personage as Mr. Mortimer figuring in a charade. But the gentleman took the demand in excellent part; smiled, hesitated, apologised for his probable awkwardness on this his first appearance on any stage, and immediately joined the dramatis personæ behind the screen, from whence he emerged, to our great amusement, saucepan in hand, in the character of an old German baron.

## CHARADE THE FIRST.

SCENE THE FIRST.

A Dining-room in a Country Mansion.

Baron Von Blumack, Mr. Collins.

(The Baron is engaged in stirring, and otherwise superintending the contents of a saucepan on the fire.)

Mr. Collins. It does not signify talking, Baron! You do as you like, of course, in my house—Liberty Hall!

No lady to interfere with you. But I cannot help saying that you are spoiling the perch.

Baron. My very good friendt, you know noding of de mattere.

- Mr. C. Nothing of perch! Have not I been a "brother of the angle" any time these thirty years? Are not these very fish of my catching? And were they not half an hour ago leaping alive in my basket, little dreaming, poor things, that they should ever be turned into water zootse—or whatever you call your confounded slop? Know nothing of perch!
- Bar. Noding of de cookery. To cache is von dingto vat you call dresse is anoder.
- Mr. C. A pretty dressing truly! But did not Philips my housekeeper—I suppose you'll admit that she knows something of cookery?
  - Bar. No-she vas know noding eider.
- Mr. C. Philips know nothing! Really, my dear Baron, I should have thought that the dinners which you have done me the honour to eat in this house might have carried with them a practical conviction, that the cook who dressed them was no ordinary kitchen drudge. But the dressing of perch is no disputed point in the gastronomic science—no "debateable land." All the world knows that they ought to be fried with Scotch oatmeal in fresh butter. Not that I care for the dish—

I never touch it—but being the produce of my own rod, I have a kindness for the fish, and don't like to see them spoilt. Now, if you had suffered Philips to fry them—you'll allow that Philips can fry, I suppose?

Bar. Mistress Philippe is very clevere. It is moche piti dat she do not be teche to make water zootse. Here is de recepe in her own book—Lissenne—(reads.)—" First cache yore fish, den——"

Mr. C. Trash! Trash! Philips knows that no cook would stay long in my house, who dressed fish according to that recipe.

Bar. Will you ring de bell?—(Mr. Collins rings.)
—De water zootse is almost be do.—(A servant enters, and goes to assist the Baron.)—Stay—you will nocke down de pot. I will take it op.

Mr. C. What do you want?

Bar. A deepe dishe, and two plaite, and bread, and boottere, and parsley, if you please, sare.—(Exit Servant, and returns immediately with the things required by the Baron.)—It is moche piti you have no Hambro' parsley, my good friendt! I can get you some from de graite inn at Staine; dey keep it in their gardenne on purpose for de water zootse. Now my dishe is done. Eat, and taste how nice it is, soupe and fishe and all. Taste a leetel in von spoon.

Mr. C. Taste! My dear Baron, I don't want to put you out of conceit of your luncheon—but the sight's

enough for me. No tasting, thank ye. You don't really mean to eat all that slop of fish liquor?

Bar. Onless you will lete me give you a leetel. Now, my goodt friendt, onely von leetel drope, von drope in de ladel.

Mr. C. I! Heaven forbid I should spoil your appetite, my dear Baron, but I'd as soon take a ladleful out of the hog-tub. He's actually discussing the whole concern! fish, fish-liquor, bread, and butter, and parsley,—a precious luncheon! For my part, I shall never conceit the sight of a perch again, dead or alive. Even in the stream they'll have a twang of that infernal water zootse.

#### SCENE THE SECOND.

# A Lady's Morning Apart ment.

Mrs. Cuthbert, and Emily, a girl of fourteen years old, who is standing by a cage with a dove at one end of the room.

Emily. Oh, mamma! mamma! Pray come here, my dear mamma?

Mrs. Cuthbert. What is the matter, Emily?

Em. My dove, mamma, my dove! My beautiful dove!

Mrs. C. It is not dead, I hope?

Em. Oh, mamma, it's dying. Can't we do any thing

to help it? Only see how it droops its poor pretty head; and the bright scarlet eye, so like the cornelian you showed me the other day, is almost closed, and the wing hanging down, and the soft plumage stained and rumpled, and the dark ring round its neck ruffled and displaced. Oh it must die, my poor pretty dove!

Mrs. C. Nay, Emily, it is reviving. See, it is gathering itself up. No! you are right, it is really dying—shivering and gasping, and rocking on its perch. One faint quiver—the death quiver—and now it falls—dead, poor bird! quite dead.

Em. Every thing that I love is sure to die. It was but a few days ago that the nasty cat killed the other dove. I'll never have a bird again.

Mrs. C. I was afraid that this one would not live long after it had lost its companion.

Em. Ought not we to have got another, mamma? Why did not we get another?

Mrs. C. That would not have saved it, Emily. These beautiful creatures have within them the beautiful instinct of constancy, and are faithful in life and in death. Don't cry so, dearest. Come with me to the greenhouse, and Richard shall bury your poor favourite under the great myrtle. Did you never hear the old Italian story of the Pot of Basil? I'll read it to you this evening. And we'll bury your poor faithful bird; and your brother Henry shall write its epitaph. Think how

he'll celebrate the tender bird that died of love and grief! Your dove will be as famous as that of Anacreon. Come, my own Emily, dry your eyes, and come with me to the greenhouse.

[Exeunt.

#### SCENE THE THIRD.

## An Hotel in Plymouth.

## HARCOURT and CORBYN, meeting.

Corbyn. Ha! Tom! how d'ye do? I'm glad to see thee, faith! I did not think to be so glad to-day; for poor Fanny and the little ones are just gone—and parting—I won't talk of it—Oh, it's a terrible tug to the heartstrings, and makes a man's throat feel as if he was choking. But I won't talk of it. How has the world gone with you?

Harcourt. Passably.

Cor. I'm almost as glad to see thee as if poor Fanny—but we won't talk of that now. Where have you been these two years? I have not set eyes on you since the poor old Zenobia was paid off, and we were turned adrift on the wide world. What quarter of the globe have you been in?

Har. Cruising about France and Italy. Civil people, Jack, and a fine climate; but nothing like old friends and old England. The women, to be sure, are handsome, and tight rigged.

Cor. Handsome! Zounds, you have never seen my Fanny! If you had only come an hour sooner—and yet her dear eyes were swelled out of her head with crying—you'd not have seen half her beauty.

Har. I'd have given a quarter's pay, Jack, to have seen the wife of your heart, beautiful or not.

Cor. Would you? You are just the good fellow you always were. Many a time Fanny and I have talked of Tom Harcourt; of the pranks we played together when we were Mids on board the Ardent—we were sad wicked young dogs, Tom; of the drubbing we gave the Yankees in the dear old Zenobia, and of your good nursing when the splinter wounded my leg—you see I'm a little lame still—no woman could have nursed me more tenderly—not even her dear self. Many a time has Fanny laughed and cried at the name of Tom Harcourt. Poor Fanny! I won't talk of her any more—only somehow I can't help it.

Har. I like to hear of her. Where did you first meet?

Cor. At Harry Morris's—You remember Harry Morris? I went to spend a month with him as soon as I came ashore, just, as he said, to recover my land legs; and there was Fanny on a visit to Mrs. Morris. I fell in love with her the moment I saw her sweet face, not altogether on account of its prettiness, pretty as she is, but because she seemed so good and so merry, such a

kind, innocent, laughing creature. Before the end of the week I had popped the question, and before the month was out we were married.

Har. And her friends, did they consent?

Cor. Why, there was a little difficulty. Her parents were dead, and her uncle, Sir Charles, (for she's a baronet's niece,) talked of the offers she had refused, and the offers she might still expect, and lectured, and quarrelled, and threatened never to see her again. Fanny was of age, and stood firm. And now the old gentleman, who is really a good sort of man, is quite reconciled. We had neither of us much money; but her little joined to my little, and the hope of a war, and her good management, kept all things comfortable. God bless her! Oh, if you could but have seen us in our little cottage in the midst of the Devonshire hills—such a nest!—Can't you run over and see her?—It's only twenty miles off-The walls all covered with roses, and passion flowers, and jessamine—all within so neat and bright—then the little ones—two such cherubs! and the mother an angel. Oh, she has made my home a Paradise, Harcourt! Do go and see her. I wish I could go with you; but I can't, for I am under orders.

Har. So am I.

Cor. What ship?

Har. The Alfred.

Cor. The Alfred, Captain Hanley?

Har. The same.

Cor. Well, that is a comfort! That is a blessing! To think of our sailing together again!—Give me your hand, Tom. The man I love best in the world! To think of our meeting in the same ship!

Har. I am as glad of it, Jack, as you can be for your life.

Cor. I'll write and tell Fanny directly.—Shake hands again, Tom—I'll write to her instantly.

Har. And tell her that we'll talk of her every day, and drink her health every evening.

Cor. You're the best fellow on earth, Tom. To think of our meeting! [Execut.

The two debuts had given a great interest to this charade, and had even kept Mrs. Wilkins attentive, and Mr. Wilkins awake. Nothing could be more different than the success of the two new performers. Mr. Mortimer had astonished every body with his cookery and his broken English, and was admitted on all hands to be one of the best comic actors ever seen in any theatre: it was the very perfection of quiet humour, without a touch of caricature; and, as Tom observed, his happening to be a rich man and a gentleman, must be considered as a public loss.

Annie, on the other hand, had been delightfully bad, laughing where she ought to have cried, and putting her

sister out by her blunders, which was the more provoking, as Sophia observed, because, on the occasion of a real dove's dying in the same way, Annie had cried for a whole morning. Annie confessed her bad acting, and begged her sister's pardon with great humility, but added, that she never could cry for any thing make-believe, not even when she was a little girl; and was quite sure she never should. Sophy forgave her, on condition of her not repeating her performance; and her father enquired of Mr. Mortimer whether their scene had not reminded him of the extempore play in Shirley's Bird in a Cage? To which Mr. Mortimer replied, that it had, adding, with a gallantry as unexpected as his good acting had been, that the part in question was by far the most charming of Shirley's charming old comedy. The three gentlemen then adjourned behind the screen for another charade, of which the new performer was again the hero, and which I shall subjoin, leaving the solution of that and the former one to the sagacity of my readers.

### CHARADE THE SECOND.

SCENE I.

Lexington, alone, in the superb library of a large country house—the shutters closed.

Lexington. Soh! here I am once again in the man-

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sion of my forefathers,—the mansion that should have been mine,—the mansion that shall be mine, if art, and skill, and boldness, can make it so. Where loiters this old dolt of a steward, whose honesty—so the phrase goes-'tis a fine word that honesty, but I can bear the sound-whose honesty I must put to the proof? Can he be watching over the corse of his dead master? No. no! there be other guess mourners for that work; men of black, who vend grief by the day, and tears by the hour,-who shut out the sun, and make a darkness and a silence as of midnight in the midst of the light and stirring world. Precious mockery! as if death were not still enough,-as if the sunbeams could penetrate the leaden coffin, or the sound of laughter echo in the dead man's ear. If I should inherit—as I will inherit—this splendid property, of which I am the natural heir, then -but I must read once more my trusty spy's letter, and make myself perfect in the part which I am to play. 'Tis no child's lesson.—[ Takes out a letter and reads.] "There certainly was a will, written, signed, and sealed last November, and placed in the charge of old Hollis. Your only chance is to gain him, which, if the will be not delivered up to your cousin, I think possible. Every man has his price-"-[Looking up and speaking.] Your's, Master John Solmes, has been a pretty stout one, as my pocket can witness.—[Then reading again.] -"Every man has his price. Old Hollis would probably be invulnerable to an actual offer of money, however considerable the sum; yet no man is likelier to vield to an artful mixture of flattery and indirect bribes. The points on which you must assail him are"-[Continuing to look over the letter, and muttering rapidly to himself. ]-- "old affection-grand-daughter Lucy-bitch Hebe-dog Hector-Hadley coursing meeting-Frimbleton Lea."—[Again reading connectedly.]—" These are the weak points of the citadel."—[Then speaking.] -Precious scoundrel!-unutterable coxcomb! must take his advice. Let me see once more. dled dog Hector-Hadley coursing meeting-granddaughter Lucy-little bitch Hebe-Frimbleton Lea farm—Hector—Hebe—Lucy—Hadley—Frimbleton ay-Frimbleton Lea-Lea Farm." So now I am perfect.

#### SCENE II.

### Enter Hollis to Lexington.

Lex. Mr. Hollis? Yes, certainly, Mr. Hollis. The many years that have passed since I saw you cannot chase from my recollection the person on whose knee I so often sate when a little child, and from whom I afterwards received so much kindness when a boy at school. You are well, I trust, my good friend?

Hol. As well, please your honour, as I can expect to be under so heavy an affliction. It is a sore trial to an

old servant to lose the master whom he had served for fifty years.

Lex. And such a master! But you look hale and hearty; just as you looked twelve years ago, when we parted in this very room, as I was about to return to Westminster after the Christmas holidays. Little did either of us think then, Mr. Hollis, that twelve years would pass before we met again; still less that our next meeting would take place under circumstances so disastrous. But still it's a comfort to find one old friend looking so well. I love old friends, Mr. Hollis. Nothing like an old friend.

Hol. You are very good, sir. But John Solmes, when he told me you wished to speak to me in private, mentioned something of business—

Lex. A moment, Mr. Hollis. Sit down: I love to talk to an old friend. Nothing like old friends!—How is my pretty play-mate, Lucy, with her blue eyes and her golden hair? Lucy must be quite the belle of the village by this time.

Hol. Passable, sir. A good girl, but homely,—a very good girl. But this business——

Lex. I must renew my acquaintance with her. And your greyhounds? I find that you are still as famous for your breed as when we used to go out coursing together with your old brindled dog Hector, the boast of the country side. No sport like it.

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Hol. None, sir; none.

Lex. The only sport of the world in my opinion. Does Mr. Frederick Harley—my cousin I suppose I ought to call him—does that young gentleman course much?

Hol. Ah, well-a-day! not he, sir. He's too bookish.

Lex. Indeed! That's no good sign in my opinion. Your reading young men, my good Hollis—But it is a delicate subject for you to talk of—too delicate, perhaps. A friend of mine, who was at the Hadley meeting, says that your bitch Hebe was the prettiest creature he ever saw in slips, and by far the fastest in the field. She ought to have won the cup.

Hol. Your friend's a judge, sir. 'Twas mere ignorance in the umpires, two fox-hunting chaps, who don't know a greyhound from a mastiff. I challenged the dog that was matched with her, the next day, for twenty guineas; but his master would not run him; pretended he was cut; all a sham; afraid of the bitch.

Lex. No doubt, my good friend; no doubt. Is Hebe a descendant of Hector?

Hol. Hector was the grandsire of her dam.

Lex. Ah, I thought you would not get out of the breed! What a superb dog that was! Such a chest!—such a neck!—such loins!—then his stern!—"Tailed like a rat—footed like a cat"—you remember the old

lines \*; Hector seemed born to verify that description. I shall never forget the single handed course we had with him one day at Frimbleton Lea, when he turned the hare twenty times in a space no bigger than this room, and at last caught her flying as she was going over the fence, then brought her straight to us, and laid her down at your feet. Those were pleasant days, Mr. Hollis. Who lives at Frimbleton Lea now?

Hol. Farmer Bennet, sir; but his lease is out at Michaelmas.

Lex. That's a nice tight farm now, Mr. Hollis, and would just suit you. Capital coursing; a pretty house; near enough to the Hall; and yet far enough off for independence. Just the place for you. If I were the landlord——an old, faithful servant like you, my good friend, ought to be considered. Rent should not stand in the way.

Hol. Ah, sir!

• The old rhyming description of a perfect greyhound runs thus:

> Tailed like a rat, Footed like a cat, Necked like a drake, Headed like a snake, Backed like a beam, Sided like a bream:

which last word means the fish of that name, an object of culinary luxury, and, therefore, of sport, familiar to our ancestors, but little valued by their descendants. Lex. And if I—— Come nearer to me, Hollis; I want to speak to you as a friend, an old friend, an assured friend. Sit closer. It is twelve years since I was in this house. A long banishment, Hollis;—a severe punishment for the boyish frolic that caused my expulsion from Westminster. My late uncle was a severe man.

Hol. A good man, Mr. Edward.

Lex. A good man, but severe. Consider within yourself, Hollis: first to adopt the only son of his only brother, his godson, his namesake, his natural heir; then to discard that heir for a mere freak of youthful spirits, and bring forward in his place the youngest son of his youngest sister, not even the name to recommend him,—surely that was hard. I have heard it whispered that he repented of the measure, although the firmness of resolve on which he piqued himself forbade him to declare his change of feeling; that in his latter days the name of Edward Lexington was more gracious to him than that of Frederick Harley.

Hol. Ah, sir! I am afraid that his will will not confirm this report.

Lex. His will! Is there such a document?

Hol. In my possession.

Lex. And the fortune is bequeathed——

Hol. To your cousin. All the estates, real and personal, are devised to his beloved nephew. Frederick Harley.

Lex. Unjust!—unnatural!—cruel!—monstrous!—From the earliest records of our ancient house, down to this very hour, its territorial possessions have descended in regular succession male from father to son, from brother to brother. Lexington of Lexington!—the noblest dukedom in the land did not seem more inalienable than that proud heritage.

Hol. Alack, sir! If it had been entailed-

Lex. Entails were never thought of. They would have seemed a weaker bond than the immemorial use of our whole ancestry. Frederick Harley the heir of Lexington!

Hol. Truly, sir, I lament-

Lex. Lament!—Hark ye, Hollis. There be cases in which men "to do a great right do a little wrong." It stands now within your power to render me a nobler justice than could be shown by the judge upon his bench, or the king upon his throne.

Hol. Sir! Master Edward!

Lex. The will, man!—the will!

Hol. What mean ye?

Lex. Is not the will in thy possession?

Hol. It is.

Lex. Go to! go to! I did not think thee so dull of apprehension. Say that there were no will, who would inherit?

Hol. Yourself, as heir at law.

Lex. Ay—I, the heir at law, the natural heir, the heir of custom and of justice; Lexington of Lexington. Hast thou been a retainer of that bold race until thy hairs are white with age, and dost thou not feel the magic of the name?

Hol. Alack, sir-

Lex. Old man, it was on thy knee that I first learned its spell; on thy knee, and from thy tales of love and of valour, of the brave knights and the fair dames of Lexington. Would the bold Sir Hugh, think'st thou, who in these very halls took such signal vengeance on the treacherous kinsman who usurped his lands during his long absence in the holy wars,—would Sir Hugh, think'st thou, have brooked this usurpation?

Hol. Ah, Master Edward, those days are past. We now live under the law, and to commit an unlawful

Lex. Unlawful! I ask thee but to remedy a great injustice. Unlawful! It shall be known only to ourselves. Heaven forbid that I should peril an old friend! I had rather—— Mark me, Hollis! The day that I take possession of these fair manors, the pretty homestead of Frimbleton Lea, with all its interchange of meadow and woodland, shall be assigned to thee in perpetuity.—(Aside.)—By heaven, he listens.

Hol. But to destroy-

Lex. A bit of blotted parchment! Pshaw! Hast thou

drawn leases for fifty years, and tremblest at the crackling of sheepskin?

Hol. But a will? The very name hath something in it of sacred and irrevocable.

Lex. Irrevocable! Why, 'tis another name for mutability. Look into thine own mind, watch the course of thy own thoughts, thy own resolves, and then say if the leaves of the aspen, the sand of the desert, the fitful wind, the eddying ocean foam, be not firm and stedfast when mated with the will of man. — (Aside.) He wavers! (Aloud.) Hearken, Hollis. Do this, and perchance—Thou hast a fair grandchild, and I am yet unwedded—Do this, and——Who comes here?

#### SCENE THE THIRD.

### Enter HARLEY to the above.

# Frederick Harley!

Har. The same, sir. When I tell you that, apprised of your coming by Mr. Hollis, I have been the auditor of this conference, you will hardly wonder that the first exercise of my authority as master of this house should be to command your instant departure.

Lex. Command!

Har. I have said it, sir.

Lex. And to me, the rightful heir.

Har. To you whose inheritance is forfeited by your vices. The heir! Why even if you had succeeded in corrupting a man whose honesty I believe to be impregnable, there are three other copies of the will. That, sir, is one. Take it, and depart. Depart, I say.

Lex. You shall dearly atone for these insults, Frederick Harley. We shall meet again.

Har. In a court of justice?

Lex. In the field.

Har. Never.

Lex. Wouldst thou shelter thy cowardice under the plea of kindred? Cold and scornful usurper! Are we too near in blood to meet in honour?

Har. Honour! And dares a suborner, a felon, a forger—dares such a one as thou to name the word? No, sir, 'tis not because we are of the same blood,—though I shame to think that one drop of thy polluted stream should flow in my veins,—'tis not the nearness of our kindred, but the difference of our natures that prevents our meeting. The gulf that parts us is that which lies between fair fame and foul disgrace; between crime and honesty. I pardon thee, for thou art below my vengeance—but depart, I counsel thee, depart! Rear not thy crest at me, lest, reptile as thou art, I spurn thee and I crush thee. Speak not, but begone! I pardon thee, sir.

## OLD MASTER GREEN.

### A VILLAGE SKETCH.

A PARTICULAR sort of mould, which in this county is scarcely to be found except in the tract of land called Chittling Moor, being wanted to form a compost for that very dear part of my small possessions, my beautiful geraniums, we determined to accompany, or rather to follow, in our pretty pony phaeton, the less aristocratic cortège, consisting of two boys with wheelbarrows, and old Master Green with a donkey-cart, who had been dispatched to collect it some two hours before.

The day was one of the latest in August, and the weather splendidly beautiful, clear, bright, breezy, sunny. It would have been called too warm by one half of the world, and by the other too cold, which I take to be as near an approach to perfection as our climate, or any climate, can well compass. We had been

sitting in our large parlour-like greenhouse; a superb fuschia, bending with the weight of its own blossoms, reaching almost to the top of the house, on one side of the door, and a splendid campanula, with five distinct stems, covered with large yet delicate lilac bells, on the other; the rich balmy scent of the campanula blending with the exquisite odours of tuberoses, jessamine, mignonette, full blown myrtles, and the honey-sweet clematis, and looking out on gay beds of the latest flowers, china asters, dahlias, hydrangeas blue and pink, phlox white and purple, the scarlet lobellia, and the scarlet geranium. In short, all within my little garden was autumn, beautiful autumn.

On the other side of our cottage the season seemed to have changed. The China roses and honeysuckles, with which it is nearly covered, were in the profuse bloom of early June, and the old monthly rose by the door-way, (the sweetest of roses!) together with a cluster of sweet-peas that grew among its branches, were literally smelling of summer. The quantity of rain that had fallen had preserved the trees in their most vivid freshness, and the herbage by the road-side and the shorter turf on the common had all the tender verdure of spring.

As we advanced, however, through the narrow lanes, autumn and harvest reasserted their rights. Every here

and there, at the corners where branches jutted out, and in the straits where the hedges closed in together. loose straws of oats and barley, torn from their different waggons, hung dangling from the boughs, mixed with straggling locks of hay, the relics of the after-crop. We ourselves were fain to drive into a ditch, to take shelter from a dingy procession of bean-carriers. My companion, provoked at the ditchy indignity, which his horse relished no better than himself, asserted that the beans could not be fit to carry; but, to judge from the rattling and crackling which the huge black sheaves made in their transit, especially when the loaded wain was jerked a little on one side, to avoid entirely driving over our light and graceful open carriage, which it overtopped, and threatened to crush, as the giant in the fairy tale threatens Tom Thumb-to judge by that noisy indication of ripeness, ripe they were. The hedgerows, too, gave abundant proofs in their own vegetation of the advancing season. The fragrant hazel-nuts were hardening in their shells, and tempting the schoolboy's hand by their swelling clusters; the dewberries were colouring; the yellow St. John's wort, and the tall mealy leaved mullein, had succeeded the blushing bells of the foxglove, which, despoiled of its crimson beauty, now brandished its long spikes of seed-vessels upon the bank, above which the mountain-ash waved its scarlet berries in all the glory of autumn; whilst, as we emerged

from the close narrow lanes into the open tract of Hartley Common, patches of purple heath just bursting into flower, and the gorse and broom pushing forth fresh blossom under the influence of the late rainy weather, waved over the light harebell, the fragrant thyme, and the springing fungi of the season. In short, the whole of our Berkshire world, as well as that very dear and very tiny bit of it called my garden, spoke of autumn, beautiful autumn, the best if not the only time for a visit to the Chittling Moor.

These Moors were pretty much what the word commonly indicates, a long level tract of somewhat swampy pasture land, extending along the margin of the Kennett, which in other parts so beautiful, rolled heavily and lazily through its abundant, but somewhat coarse, herbage; a dreary and desolate place when compared with the general scenery of our richly-wooded and thickly-peopled country, and one where the eye, wandering over the dull expanse, unbroken by hill, or hedge, or timber tree, conveyed, as is often the case in flat, barren, and desolate scenes, an idea of space more than commensurate with the actual extent.

The divisions of this large piece of ground are formed of wide ditches, which at once serve to drain and to irrigate these marshy moors, so frequently overflowed by the river in spring and winter, and sometimes even in summer; it being no unusual catastrophe for the coarse and heavy crops to be carried away by a sudden flood, disappointing the hopes of the farmer, and baffling the efforts of the haymaker. A weary thing was a wet summer in the Chittling Moor, with the hav field one day a swamp and the next a lake; and the hav, or rather the poor drowned grass, that should have been hay, choking the ditches, or sailing down the stream! The best that could befal it was to be carried off in waggons in its grassy shape, and made comfortably and snugly on dry ground, in some upland meadow; but people cannot always find room for the outer integuments of three hundred acres of grass land, and, besides that difficulty, the intersecting ditches, with their clattering hollow-sounding wooden bridges, presented no ordinary peril to the heavy wains, so that the landlord was fain to put up with little rent, and the farmer with small profit—too happy if the subsequent grazing paid the charge or the loss of the prolonged and often fruitless hav-harvest.

A dreary scene was the Chittling Moor; a few old willow pollards, the most melancholy of trees, formed the sole break to its dull uniformity, and one small dwelling, whose curling smoke rose in the distance above a clustering orchard, was the only sign of human habitation. This small cottage had been built chiefly to suit the circumstances of the Moor, which rendered a public-house necessary during the long hay-making;

and it was kept by a widow, who contrived to make the profits of that watery but drouthy season pay for the want of custom during the rest of the year. Not that the Widow Knight was absolutely without customers at any period; the excellence and celebrity of her homebrewed having ensured to her a certain number of customers, who, especially on Sundays, used to walk down to the Chittling Gate (so was her domicile entitled) to partake of the luxuries of a pipe and a pot of ale, scream to the deaf widow, gossip with her comely daughter, or flirt with her pretty grandchild, (for the whole establishment was female) as their several ages or dispositions might prompt.

Of this number none was more constant than our present attendant, old Master Green, and it is by no means certain, whether his familiarity with the banks and pollards which afforded the true geranium mould may not have been acquired by his hebdomadal visits to the Widow Knight's snug and solitary ale-house.

Old George Green was indeed a veteran of the taproom, one to whom strong beer had been for nearly seventy years the best friend and the worst enemy, making him happy and keeping him poor. He called himself eighty-five; and I presume, from the report of other people, as well as his own, (for when approaching that age, vanity generally takes the turn of making itself older,) that he might really be past fourscore. A wonderful man he was of his years, both in appearance and constitution. Hard work had counteracted the ill effects of hard drinking, as an equal quantity of labour, under the form of hard riding, sometimes used to do by a jovial fox-hunting squire of former times, and had kept him light, vigorous, and active, as little bent or stiffened by age as the two boys who were delving out the earth under his direction. The only visible mark which age had set upon him-mark did I say? a brand, a fire-brand—was in his nose, which was of the true Bardolphian size and colour, and a certain roll of the eye, which might perhaps, under any circumstances, have belonged to the man and his humour, but which much resembled that of a toper, when half-tipsy, and fancying himself particularly wise.

The very Nestor of village topers was Master Green, hearty, good-humoured, merry, and jolly, very civil, and a little sly. He was quite patriarchal in the number of his descendants, having had the Mahommedan allowance of four wives, although, after the Christian fashion, successively, and more children and grand-children than he could conveniently count. Indeed, his computation varied a little, according as he happened to be drunk or sober; for he was proud of his long train of descendants, just as his betters may be proud of a long line of ancestry; and, being no disciple of the Malthusian doctrine, thought he "had done the state" (that is, the

parish) "some service," in rearing up a goodly tribe of sons and daughters, many of them in their turn grandfathers and grandmothers, and most of whom had conducted themselves passably in the world, as times gothanks probably to a circumstance which he sometimes lamented, their being, men and women, but puny tipplers compared with their jolly progenitor. Even his favourite grandson and namesake, only son and heir of the most prosperous of his innumerous family, Master Green, the thriving carpenter of East Hartley, who, like a dutiful lad, came every Sunday afternoon to the Chittling Gate to meet his grandfather, abandoning for that purpose the cricket-ground at Hartley, where he, a singularly fine young man, had long been accounted the best player—even this favourite grandson was, he declared, little better than a milk-sop, a swallower of tea and soda-water. "I verily believe," said Master Green, "that a pot of double X would upset him!"

A friend and a promoter of matrimony in all its shapes, especially in the guise of a love-match, was our worthy great-grandfather, whether in his own person, or in the person of his descendants. Four wives had he had of happy memory, and he spoke of them all with mingled affection and philosophy, as good sort of women in the main, though the first was somewhat of a slut, the second ugly, the third silly, and the last a scold, which, as he observed, "might be one reason that

he missed her so much, poor woman! the house seemed so quiet and unked;"—whereupon he sighed, and then, with a roll of his eye and a knowing twist of his Bardolphian nose, began to talk of the necessity of his looking out for a fifth helpmate.

By this time the operation of collecting the geranium mould was in full activity; and the conversation of the old man and the two lively boys, to which we were authorized listeners, and in which my companion soon became an interlocutor, gave us to understand that they were in possession of some farther information respecting Master Green's matrimonial intentions.

- "We all know why he goes to the Chittling Gate every Sunday," said Ben, an arch saucy lad, of whom we have before heard in this volume.
- "Any child may know that," responded Master Green, trying to look demure and innocent, like a young lady when rallied on her admirers; "any child can tell that. The Widow Knight brews the best ale in the parish."
- "Ay, but that's not the only reason," said John, a modest youth of sixteen: "is it Ben?"
  - "It's reason enough," rejoined Master Green.
  - "But not the reason," retorted Ben.
  - "What! the widow herself?" quoth my companion.
  - "Lord, no, sir," interrupted Ben.
  - "'Twould be a very suitable match, and a snug vol. v. o

resting-place, only I'm afraid he would drink up all the ale in the cellar;" pursued the interrogator.

- "Lord, no, sir!" again exclaimed Ben. "Master Green thinks the widow too old."
- "Too old! Why she's a score of years younger than himself, but I suppose he prefers the daughter?"
- "No, no, sir," rejoined Ben; "she's too old, too. The grand-daughter, the grand-daughter! That's the match for Master Green."
- "What! the young pretty girl, Susan Parker, a girl of eighteen, marry a man of eighty! nonsense, Ben."
- "They've been asked in church, sir;" said John, quietly; "I heard it myself."
- "Asked in church! But I thought the young carpenter was after Susan? Asked in church! Master Green, are you rivaling your own grandson?"
- "His father the sick carpenter would not hear of that match," cried Ben, "because Susan had no money."
  - "And what does he say to this match, Ben?"
- "Sir, he says that he likes it worse than t'other, but that he can't help this; that his father is an old fool, and must answer for his own folly."
- "Well, but Susan! she never can be such a goose. It must be a mistake. Have you really been asked in church, Master Green? Have the banns actually been published?"

- "Twice, sir, in full form," answered the old man gravely. "I wonder your honour did not hear them."
  - "And is the match really to take place?"
  - "Next Monday, your honour, God willing."
- "Pshaw! nonsense! the thing's impossible! you are all joking."
- "Time will prove, Sir," rejoined Master Green, still more gravely; and, the geranium mould being now fairly collected, we parted.

And on the next Monday the marriage did take place, sure enough, though not exactly in the way anticipated, George Green the younger proving to be the bridegroom, to the surprise of bridemaid, parson, and clerk: whilst the rich carpenter, unable to resist the double pleadings of his father and his son, and somewhat pleased to be spared the scandal of so youthful a step-mother, forgave the trick and the stolen match; and old George Green, in the fulness of his delight, got tipsier than ever, in honour of his success, and toasted the Widow Knight so often and so heartily in her own home-brewed, that it's odds but he becomes the landlord of that snug alehouse, the Chittling Gate, after all.

## EARLY RECOLLECTIONS.

CAROLINE CLEVELAND.

A SCHOOL-DAY ANECDOTE.

In most great schools, as in other large assemblies of persons, one will generally be found, who, without being by any means the worst disposed or the most stupid, is yet in more scrapes, and oftener punished, than all the rest put together, and who comes at last to be pitied by every one but her teachers as thoroughly unlucky. They, indeed, go on punishing, partly on the theory so happily illustrated in Miss Edgeworth's delightful story of Murad, in her Popular Tales, that ill-luck is generally but another name for want of forethought—and unlucky, when applied to a school-girl, may be best translated careless—and partly on the principle which caused Frederick of Prussia, miscalled the Great, to punish the soldier whose hat was blown off by a high wind at a re-

view. The sentence seemed abundantly unjust, but it produced the desired effect—the wind blew off no more hats.

Between twenty and thirty years ago, when I, a small damsel of twelve years old, or thereabout, was at Mrs. Meadows's respectable seminary for young ladies in Cadogan Place, the several parts of Miss Edgeworth's hero, Murad the unlucky, and Frederick of Prussia's unhatted soldier, were enacted by a young country-girl called Caroline Cleveland, the scape-goat of the school. Among the twenty select pupils to whom our governess bounded her cares, not one was half so often in trouble as Miss Cleveland. She tore more frocks, lost more gloves, blotted more books, blurred more drawings, than all the rest of the young ladies put together, and was, in short, a very by-word for indolence, awkwardness, and untidiness. Drawing-masters, writing-masters, music-masters, and dancing-masters, were never weary of complaining of her inattention; and, from the housemaid, as she dressed her, grumbling at her for spoiling her clothes, to Mrs. Meadows, lecturing her for not knowing her lessons, poor Caroline was scolded and thwarted every day and all day long.

Notwithstanding her faults, however, there was a pretty general feeling of liking for the culprit, even among those who scolded her most. There was something exceedingly disarming in the good humour of the poor little girl; her entire submission to reproof, the total absence of sullenness and self-justification towards her superiors, and the unenvying and affectionate disposition which she evinced towards her more fortunate companions. Generous, disinterested, and benevolent, she was full of that general good-will, that overflowing and warm-hearted kindness, which are so certain to be repaid in kind. It was impossible not to like one who was so ready to love, and so zealous to serve, every creature that came in her way. If there had been a prize for sweetness of temper, she would have had no competitor.

Another motive, too, caused more than usual interest to be felt for Miss Cleveland. Her father filled a high situation in one of our colonies; her mother and eldest sisters lived abroad with him; and Caroline, left in England for education, under the care of a worthy but rigid grand-aunt, who lived in far Northumberland, and whom she never saw from holydays to holydays, was regarded by those whose own dear parents lived near, and saw them frequently, with much of the pity due to an orphan. Such was the position of Caroline Cleveland at the time my story commences.

If any among her innumerable transgressions against the rules of the school might be accounted her besetting sin, it was speaking English. French was the universal language of the house, and an English mark was passed among the young ladies, transferred from culprit to culprit as they were detected in the fact, and called for three times a day, when the unlucky damsel who happened to be in possession of the badge was amerced in the sum of threepence; the collective threepences being, every second day, transmuted into silver, and deposited in a money-box, a sort of mimic savings' bank, to be expended in a feast at the close of the half-year.

The usual wearer of this order of demerit—an oval piece of wood, with ENGLISH, in large capitals engraven on its front, suspended by a riband from the neck—the common bearer of this unseemly decoration was poor Caroline, who never could take the trouble of talking French on the one hand, or find in her heart to listen after her fellow-talkers in English on the other: so that, being from her parents' absence not very amply supplied with cash, and her habitual thoughtlessness extending itself in a remarkable degree to the financial department, she had, at the date of our story, about a month before the holydays, not only arrived at the bottom of the purse which had been furnished to her for the half-year, but had actually contracted a debt amounting to the almost incredible sum of two guineas to that grand joint-stock property, the mark.

Not one of the shareholders but would most willingly have abandoned her part of the claim against the defaulter. Readily would the whole company have foregone all the luxuries of the mark-feast—the oranges, the almonds and raisins, the dried cherries, the candied angelica, the brioches, the macaroons, all the confections, French and English—with which that auspicious half-holyday was wont to be celebrated, as well as the orgeat, the capillaire, the eau de groseille, and even the two bottles of ginger wine—innocuous beverage!—the crowning two bottles that closed the banquet—readily would the whole festival have been abandoned rather than distress the universal favourite.

But the head teacher, who acted as a sort of trustee to the fund, felt it her duty to report the defalcation to Mrs. Meadows, who might be esteemed the president, or, at the least, a bank director; and she, in her turn, anxious to inculcate on the thoughtless offender the value of money, and the wickedness, as well as misery, of debt, however incurred, resolved to make the present a lesson which should not soon be forgotten. ingly, she told her that the money must be paid before she went to her grand-aunt's for the holydays, a visit to which she had long looked forward with delight, as one of her sisters, recently married, was expected to meet her there from abroad—or that she must pass the holydays at school. But, aware how slight was her chance of obtaining the sum needed from her rigid, methodical guardian, who always, on sending her to school, supplied her stated pocket-money for the half-year, and would

be horrified by such a demand for forfeits,—aware of her pecuniary situation, Mrs. Meadows added an offer that herself would pay the debt, and set down the money in Mr. Cleveland's bill, provided Caroline would get by heart the whole of Athalie.

The whole of Athalie! Caroline, who never yet had managed to repeat correctly a fable of La Fontaine's, or a page of the Henriade, or even a chorus of Estherto learn by rote the entire drama of Athalie! The poor girl was in despair. Little did it comfort her that Athalie was the chef-d'œuvre of a great poet, written to please the wife of a great king, and acted by her pupils at an institution founded by herself. However the young élèves of St. Cyr might have gloried in the representation of Athalie, to Caroline it seemed only the dreariest and weariest task ever imposed upon schoolgirl. She discovered none of the imputed sublimity; her uncritical eye could only scan the tremendous number of pages "where lines immeasurably spread"—those Alexandrines are atrocities—" seemed lengthening," as slowly and sadly she turned over the leaves. The poor little girl was inconsolable; and we, her trusty comrades, stood pitying around her, longing to contribute our joint hoards to her relief in the way of loan or subsidy; a desire which would certainly have been carried into effect, but that Mrs. Meadows, foreseeing the probability of a subscription being set on foot for so charitable a purpose, had positively prohibited the measure.

Poor dear Caroline! Just as she was turning over the leaves for the third time, tasking her arithmetic to reckon up the speeches and the lines, and vainly hoping to make them out to be fewer and shorter, we as vainly trying to insinuate hopes grounded on a projected general petition to Mrs. Meadows, from which we all knew that no hope could rationally be entertained—that lady's decisions being as unchangeable as the laws of the Medes and Persians—even at this dismal moment, as if to read us a practical lesson on the mutability of fortune, a packet arrived for Miss Cleveland from her sister, the bride, containing, besides the nuptial prettinesses of cake, and gloves, and silver favours, an affectionate note from her new brother, the bridegroom, together with a delicately wrought Indian purse, freighted with a golden guinea at either end.

Never was money so welcome! Who now so fortunate as Caroline? She uttered a cry of joy—almost a shrick; flung up to the ceiling the volume of Racine, containing Athalie, which, in its descent, touched, as I well remember, on my nose, as I happened to be looking up at the instant; and hastened to the head teacher to pay her debt, and be quit of the very thought of Athalie. Miss Stevens, the functionary in question, was not, however, at leisure to settle her account: she

was just preparing to walk out with the school, and bade Miss Cleveland get ready as fast as she could, and put her money in her pocket until they returned from their promenade.

The walk, a dull and orderly procession of nicelydressed and prim demoiselles, arranged in pairs, adjusted according to the height rather than the inclination of the parties, passed as monotonously as usual. But. on our return, Miss Stevens indulged us, and perhaps herself-for it was the very prime and flush of May, and the beauty and fragrance of the trees and flowering shrubs were almost irresistible—by a brief ramble in the delightful shades of the Cadogan Gardens. The halfhour's liberty was worth an age. The gay blossoms of the lilac, the laburnum, the double peach, and the double cherry, mingled their vivid colours with the tender green of the young leaves. The morning had been rainy, and the light drops still glittered on the grass; the birds twittered among the branches; the bright sunshine and the balmy air shed their sweet influences around us; and we were returning, full of the joyous spirit of youth, quickened by this short taste of nature and of freedom, thinking of our own dear gardens and our country homes, when one of those miserable objects, seldom seen but in great cities, brought us back to London and its most painful associations.

Leaning against the iron palisade close beside the

gate, stood a young woman with one child at her breast. and two others, emaciated and almost naked, clinging to her own squalid rags-a sad spectacle of human misery. She implored our charity, first in broken English, then in the patois of one of the southern provinces of France. Her looks and tears, and the famished appearance of the whole party, were more intelligible than her words. We gathered, however, that she was the wife of a French sailor, whose frigate had been captured by the English, and who was then imprisoned, with many hundreds of his countrymen, at Norman Cross; that a letter from one of his comrades had informed her that he was labouring under a mortal disorder; that she had prevailed on a smuggler, her relation, to land her and her children in England, that she might receive his last breath; that her little money had been expended on her road to London, whither she had travelled in hopes of finding a kind and wealthy Provençal, to whom she was furnished with letters, and who would, she was assured, forward her and her children to the prison, that her poor husband might bless them before he died; but that she had lost these letters of recommendation, and with them the address of her good countryman; and she had wandered about, friendless and homeless, a beggar in a foreign land, till now that all hopes of seeing her Henri had departed, and her only comfort was, that she and her little ones must soon die too. As she uttered the

last mournful words, the poor young woman pressed her baby closer to her bosom, and sank down on the pavement, with a gush of tears so suffocating and so passionate, that her very heart seemed bursting.

There is something in a real and a deep sorrow which goes straight to the feelings of youth. We crowded round the sufferer, in true though unavailing sympathy, and showered upon her the little money that we happened to have about us, or that the prudence of our conductress would allow. It was enough, and more than enough, to procure present support and decent lodging, but not sufficient to reclothe herself and her half-naked children, or to enable them to reach their place of destination; and, though received with the ardent thankfulness of her nation, our gift evidently excited more gratitude than joy. We continued round her, questioning her as to her plans, and the sum necessary for their accomplishment, until roused by a peremptory summons from the teacher, who crossed the street rapidly towards Mrs. Meadows's house-Caroline, who had taken an animated part in the discussion, lingering a moment behind, and joining us with some difficulty as we reached the hall-door.

On re-entering the school-room, Miss Stevens called for Miss Cleveland, and announced to her that she was then ready to receive her money, and settle the account of the mark. The little girl blushed and hesitated, and at last, picking up the volume of Racine, which she had tossed into the air two hours before, announced her intention of accepting Mrs. Meadows's kind offer, and learning Athalie. She was sure that by getting up at four o'clock every morning [N.B. She was always the latest riser in the school]—by being up every day at four o'clock, she was sure that she could do it, and she was sure that the task would do her good; she should be able to learn the common school lessons more easily another time. She would get Athalie by heart, with Mrs. Meadows's leave.

All at once the truth burst upon us. She had given her two guineas to the Frenchwoman! and on being questioned by Miss Stevens, she avowed the fact much in the style in which she might have confessed a great fault. She could not help it, she said, the poor young woman cried so; and two guineas was the exact sum needed. Besides, she was sure that her sister, Gertrude, whose husband had sent her the money, would herself have given it if she had been there; and that her papa would not mind its being charged in the bill, especially if he could but know how the poor young woman cried: her papa never liked to see people cry, if he could help them, especially foreigners in a strange land. She was sure that her sister and her father would not be angry for that, however they might blame her for speaking English and running in debt to the mark; and, for her

own part, she would rather learn Athalie—it was not so very long after all; she was sure that she could learn it, and that the task would do her good.

And she did learn Athalie; for Mrs. Meadows, whilst listening almost with tears to her generous resolution, was judicious enough to determine that she should earn her own approbation, as well as that of her friends, by completing the sacrifice. She did get up at four o'clock every morning to study Athalie, and the effect of this exertion, not only on her subsequent lessons, but on her habits and character, was salutary and permanent. She did learn Athalie: and she had her reward: for the poor Frenchwoman, for whom our good governess also interested herself, reached Norman Cross in safety, and found her husband recovering; and the news arrived on the very morning of the mark-feast, at which Caroline Cleveland, her task completed, was chosen to preside, and over which she did preside, glowing, colouring, and smiling, the gayest and happiest of school-girls.

# THE CRIBBAGE PLAYERS,

A COUNTRY DIALOGUE.

GAMBLING is not usually included in the list of country vices; and, generally speaking, perhaps it may hardly be thought, in its larger sense, to belong to them. of late, as beer-houses have multiplied, the demon of Gaming-who treads so close on the heels of that other and fouler fiend, the demon of Drunkenness-has been gradually making its way amongst our villagers. often at cards, or often for money; skittles, four-corners, quoits, or hand-bells, are their usual implements, and beer, beer, their common stake. labourer can command no other; and credit for this will, to a certain point, be always afforded by the alehouse keeper, who, in too many instances, contrives to receive so large a portion of his wages in return for that beverage, which, salutary in its proper quantity, becomes a brutalising poison in its excess. Alas, alas! the beer-houses! With all their allurements of bright fires,

and cordial welcomings, and good liquor, and jovial company! Alas, alas! the beer-houses! What were our legislators thinking of when they placed temptation in the way of poor human nature, and expected that it should have force enough to resist? Why, the alehouse is to the labourer what the club-house is to them; but then it is also—what assuredly their clubs are not—demoralization, and ruin, and death.

With the poor working man, who has neither money nor property, beer is the usual stake, and four-corners the usual game; but in a class one degree higher, and still not removed from the temptation of the alehouse and the double X, cards are often resorted to, and sums, which, trifling as they may sound, comprise the whole possessions of the unhappy gamester, won and lost at a sitting. Such an instance came under my observation last summer; and though the denouement of the story be hardly so tragical as might be expected from the induction, I will narrate it for the edification of my readers.

Aberleigh church is, for a mere country church, very beautiful, and very beautifully situated. The building, with its gothic tower richly chased and indented by old masonry, the colour of the bricks turned into a fine mellow hue by the effect of moss and lichens and weather stains, stands on the top of a gentle eminence, from which the churchyard, nearly filled with rustic tomb-

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stones, and a few ancient monuments, gradually slopes. A superb old yew, and a row of lime-trees on one side, add to the picturesqueness of the spot; and a sketch of Aberleigh church is as common in the album of a Berkshire young lady, as a view of Durham cathedral in a London exhibition-room. My fair friend Ellen G. wished to add this illustration to several others which she had taken of our village, and desiring a nearer view of the ornamental brick-work of the tower, persuaded me to accompany her to the churchyard one fine evening last June, and to remain with her whilst she completed her very faithful and very beautiful drawing.

We had been sitting there for some time, she hidden amongst the graves and tomb-stones, which served her for chairs and tables, I equally concealed by the downward branches of the old yew-tree; she absorbed in her drawing, and I thinking over Gray's immortal poem, and especially the fine stanza which he omitted in the printed copy, and which was suggested to me by a withered nosegay of pinks and roses that lay on the grass—

"There scatter'd oft, the earliest of the year, By hands unseen, are showers of violets found. The red-breast loves to build and warble there, And little footsteps lightly print the ground."

As we sate there unseen and silent I heard a succession

of deep sighs, almost amounting to groans, from a path on the other side of the yew-tree; and peeping through the boughs I saw my acquaintance, Master Edward, the smart keeper of Aberleigh, sitting on the stile in doleful dumps, whilst in a few minutes he was joined by another of my acquaintances, the head gardener at the Hall, when the following colloquy ensued between them, Edward's answers being at first wrung from him by the sheer force of his friend's importunity.

Robert. Why, Edward, what can be the matter with you, that you are sitting here mumchance on the stile in the churchyard, under the shade of the old yew-tree, looking as dismal as that dismal evergreen, instead of standing bat in hand in the merry cricket-ground this beautiful June evening? What ails you?

Edward. Nothing!

Robert. Nothing! There you sit, pulling the leaves off that twig of hazel, with your eyes fixed on the ground, and a face as solemn as if you were picking out a place for your own grave; you that all the village call the jolly young keeper. Nothing! why the very dog, Ranger, that has followed you in all moods and all weathers, the best spaniel that ever beat a covert, sits there whining and looking up in your face, as much as to say "What's the matter?" See how the poor brute is patting your knee with his rough paw.

Nothing quotha! I am not so easily put off, I promise you.

Edward. Nothing to you, at all events. Down, Ranger! down, sir! Nothing to either of you.

Robert. There's a pretty answer now; when I have come at his own special invitation, leaving the hall garden with nobody but Simon, who's a fool, to water the melons; and Joseph, who's a blunderer, to look after the pines; risking my crops, my place, and my reputation, as one of the best pupils (with all modesty I speak it) that ever left the Horticultural, for no other purpose on earth than to oblige him, and to play at cricket on Aberleigh Green.

Edward. Well, go to cricket; nobody hinders you; get along, you know your way.

Robert. Ay, but you promised to go with me. You know well enough, Ned, that you're a great man at the cricket-ground, the best bowler, the prime batsman, and as good a field as any in the county. The East Woodhay men talked of coming to try a game to-night, and what shall we do without you? And all the pretty girls of the parish will be there; your old flirt, Sally Wheeler, and the little laughing lass, Patty Ross. Come, come, we know the jolly keeper likes to be looked upon by a pair of bright eyes; come.

Edward. Not I, I promise you; I hate the very thought of a woman.

Robert. "Lord! Lord! how this world is given to lying!" as Jack Falstaff says; but I suppose I have not pitched upon the right damsel. Doubtless there'll be all the belles of the parish in honour of Whitsuntide and the cricket-match: Betsy Brown, and Mary Webb, and Letty Simmons, and Olive Wilson, and the comely Widow Smith, and pretty Miss Bailey, and—

Edward. And Miss Judith Giles, the miller's daughter, what do you think of her?

Robert. Judith Giles? I don't think of her at all. I was reckoning up the pretty girls, and not the ugly ones. Judith Giles! the lanky, gawky, raw-boned, red-haired, squinting maypole! The veriest fright within ten miles! What could put her into your head?

Edward. Listen, and you shall hear. Yesterday, as you know, was Eversley revel. I went there, unluckily; got up at four in the morning, and walked in the heat and dust all the way, to be present at the races, where my cousin John's pony, the Doctor, the clever sorrel pony, that I bred and reared, was to run for the stakes. Well, sir, I got there in time, betted rashly on the Doctor—

Robert. And lost?

Edward. Would to God I had! No, sir; I won. The pony won the stakes, and I pocketed my bets; and then, half mad with success, and parched with shouting, and heat, and dust, went into the Red Lion,

and drank beer enough to make me madder still. In that mood, whilst boasting of the pony, of my dog here, and my gun, and my shooting, and my cricketing, and my card-playing, of all, in short, that I can do, and all that I cannot, John Giles, the miller, suddenly took me up in the midst of my bravado, and challenged me to a game at cribbage.

Robert. Didn't you know that he was reckoned one of the best cribbage-players in England? That matches have been made for him in London, and great wagers won upon his head?

Edward. Yes! yes! I had heard so often, but I was past thinking of that; and if I had thought of it, it would have made no difference. "Luck's a lord!" said I to myself, in full confidence of my own good fortune; and down I sat.

Robert. Well?

Edward. Well, sir! at first I won; and then I grew madder and madder, and insisted on doubling and redoubling our stakes and bets. Then suddenly the cards turned; and I lost back all that I had won of the miller, all the bets that I had pocketed on the pony, all the little money that I had saved, all the wages due to me at Michaelmas, the cow on the common, the old horse in the field, my little crop of growing corn, my household furniture, my double-barrelled gun—the very dog at my feet! Get down, Ranger! I can't bear to look

at him, poor fellow!—even the hat on my head, and the coat on my back, did I lose to master John Giles, the good miller of Aberleigh.

Robert. The old rascal! the detestable villain! Well?

Edward. As soon as I had lost all that I possessed in the world, I regained my senses. The consciousness came upon me all at once, and completely sobered me. I walked silently out of the Red Lion, and reached home by midnight. This morning as I was considering whether I should hang or drown myself, Master Giles made his appearance.

Robert. The intolerable villain! What did he say? What could he say?

Edward. He came, he said, to set my mind at ease, and to make me a proposal. Somehow or other his daughter Judith had, he found, taken a fancy to me. He liked me himself, and being pretty well convinced that the lesson of yesterday had cured me of my propensity for gambling, would, if I chose, cancel the debt, and give me Judith, with two hundred pounds left her by her grandfather, for my wedded wife; otherwise he should of course expect to be paid like a man of honour. Thereupon he allowed me till to-morrow to make my decision; assured me that Judith was a good girl, and an excellent manager, and took himself off.—And now that you know the story, what shall I do?

Robert. Two hundred pounds and the debt forgiven!
Marry her, to be sure! Faith, the old miller's a capital
fellow! Marry her! I have no doubt but she's a nice
good-natured girl, and an excellent manager, and will
make a jewel of a wife. Marry her at once, man!

Edward. What! the lanky, gawky, raw-boned, red-

Robert. Marry her!

Edward. Squinting maypole-

Robert. Marry her, I say!

Edward. The veriest fright within ten miles?

Robert. Marry her! What does a little ugliness signify? Beauty soon passes away. Think of the debt forgiven and the two hundred pounds down! Marry her at once! Here comes the good miller! Marry her, and I'll give her away!-Master Giles, I was just congratulating Edward on his good fortune; and now I must wish you joy of your son-in-law. You could not have pitched upon a better fellow. Where's Miss Judith? Go and give her notice that we are coming, and that I have bespoken to be father at the wedding.-Come along, Ned! You're in high luck, my boy! I must go with you to the mill, to pay my respects to the bride elect, and then I'll leave you together and walk down to the cricket-ground. Come along, there's a good fellow, even Ranger knows that something pleasant is going forward—how the rogue capers. Come along, Ned! You are walking as if you were following a funeral! Come along. Two hundred pounds and the debt forgiven! Think of that. Ay! I see you are beginning to have a sense of your good fortune.

Edward. Oh, if it were not for the squint! the gaw-kiness, and the red hair, one might put up with—but that squint!

Robert. Pooh! you'll soon get used to it. Think of the two hundred pounds and the cancelling of the debt!

Edward. Well, if I must-

Robert. Must! to be sure you must. Come along! The debt cancelled and two hundred pounds in hand! Ay, that's right, mend your pace. Two hundred pounds down, my boy! A little faster, and we shall overtake the good miller. Two hundred pounds down!

And off they went to visit Miss Judith.

# THE FRESHWATER FISHERMAN.

A SKETCH.

This pretty Berkshire of ours, renowned for its pastoral villages, and its picturesque interchange of common and woodland, and small enclosures divided by deep lanes, to which thick borders of hedgerow timber give a character of deep and forest-like richness, seldom seen in countries of more ambitious pretension:—this beautiful Berkshire is for nothing more distinguished than for the number and variety of its rivers. I do not mean, in this catalogue, to include the large proportion of bright, shallow trouting-streams, for the most part unchristened and unregistered even by a parish historian, or the compiler of a county map, and known only as "the brook" by the very people whose meadows they dance through. To confine myself to rivers of state and name, we have, first of all, the rapid, changeful, beautiful Loddon, a frisky tricksy water-sprite, much addicted to wandering out of bounds, and as different from the timid, fearful, nymph Lodona, whom Pope, in a metamorphosing strain, was pleased to assign as the source of those clear waters, as any thing well can be. Next we have the Kennet-"the Kennet swift, for silver eels renowned," according to the same author, and which, in our part at least, has, generally speaking, a fine pastoral character, now sweeping along through broad valleys of meadow-land, rich and green, and finely dappled by trees, chiefly oak and elm, in park-like groups; now confined within a narrower channel, and spanned by some lofty bridge as it passes the quiet village or small country-town, enlivening every scene which it approaches by the pleasant flow of its clear waters, cool and glittering as a moonbeam. Lastly and chiefly, we possess, for the whole length of the county, and for the most part forming its sinuous boundary, the deep majestic Thames, gliding in tranquil grandeur, with a motion so slow, as to be almost imperceptible; reflecting as a mirror, in unbroken shadow, every tree and shrub that fringes its banks, and exhibiting, during all its meanders, a lake-like character of stillness and repose—a silent fulness—a calm and gentle dignity, which is, perhaps, in all things, from the human mind to the mighty river, the surest and highest symbol of power. It is singular, that even the small streamlet near Circucester, where, under the almost equally celebrated name of Isis, the Thames takes its rise, is distinguished

by the same unruffled serenity (the calmness of the infant Hercules), for which its subsequent course is so remarkable. And what a course it is! The classic domes of Oxford; the sunny plains of Berkshire; the Buckinghamshire beechwoods; Windsor, with its royal towers; Richmond, and its world of gardens; then Londonmighty London; and then the sea-its only rival in riches and in fame. Half the bards of England have sung of their great river; but never, I think, has it been more finely praised than in two sonnets, which I will venture to transcribe from the manuscript which is open before me, though I may not dare to name their author: a man too eminent in the broad highway of life to care to be seen loitering in the flowery paths of poesy. They have a local propriety, since the writer, of whose birthplace Berkshire may well be proud, passed his early youth in this neighbourhood, and it is in remembrance of those days that they were written.

# TO THE THAMES AT WESTMINSTER, IN RECOLLECTION OF THE SAME RIVER BELOW CAVERSHAM.

With no cold admiration do I gaze
Upon thy pomp of waters, matchless stream!
For home-sick fancy kindles with the beam
That on thy lucid bosom coyly plays,
And glides delighted through thy crystal ways,

Till on her eye those wave-fed poplars gleam
Beneath whose shade her first and loveliest maze
She fashioned; where she traced in richest dream
Thy mirror'd course of wood-enshrined repose
Bespread with hordes of spirits fair and bright,
And widening on till at her vision's close
Great London, only then a name of might,
To crown thy full-swoln majesty arose,
A rock-throned city clad in heavenly light.

#### TO THE SAME RIVER.

I may not emulate their lofty aim
Who, in divine imagination bold,
With mighty hills and streams communion hold
As living friends; and scarce I dare to claim
Acquaintance with thee in thy scenes of fame,
Wealthiest of rivers! though in days of old
I loved thee where thy waters sylvan roll'd,
And still would fancy thee in part the same.
As love perversely clings to some old mate
Estranged by fortune; in his very pride
Seems lifted; waxes in his greatness great;
And silent hails the lot it prophesied:
Content to think in manhood's palmy state
Some ling'ring traces of the child abide.

Our business, however, is not with the mighty Thames—the "wealthiest of rivers"—but with the pleasant and pastoral Kennet.

One of the most romantic spots that it touches in its progress is a fisherman's cottage, on the estate of my friend Colonel Talbot, who, amongst his large manorial property, possesses a right of fishery for some mile or two up the river-a right which, like other manorial possessions, combines a good deal of trouble with its pleasure and its dignity, and obliges the colonel to keep up a sort of river police for the defence of his watery demesnes. This police consists of Adam Stokes, the fisherman, of his follower, Gilbert, and his boy Ned Gilbert, who is, after all, but semi-aquatic, and belongs in "division tripartite" to the park-keeper, the gamekeeper, and the fisherman, waging fierce war with the poachers in each of his vocations, one night in defence of the deer, the next of the pheasants, and the third of the pike; Gilbert, who in right of his terrene avocations wears a green livery and a gold-laced hat, is by no means a regular inhabitant of the cottage by the Kennet side, but may be found quite as frequently up at the park, sometimes at the dog-kennel, sometimes in the servants' hall, leaving the river to the efficient watchfulness of its amphibious guardians, Adam Stokes, the boy Ned, and their dog Neptune, who, excepting when Adam was attracted by the charms of a stronger liquid to the

tap-room of the Four Horseshoes, were seldom seen half a furlong from their proper element.

Adam was a man fit to encounter poachers by land or by water—a giant of a man with more than a giant's strength, and without the gentleness which so often accompanies conscious power: he knew his full force, and delighted in its exhibition. The unwieldy boat was in his brawny hands a child's toy, and the heavy oar a bulrush. Bold was the poacher that dared to encounter Adam Stokes! His very voice, loud as that of a boatswain, was sufficient to awe any common ruffian, and the bold, bluff, weather-beaten visage, keen eye, and fearless bearing, were in excellent keeping with tones that seemed at their quietest as if issuing from a speaking-trumpet. His dress beseemed his person and his occupation-boots that might bid defiance to mud or water, a blue jacket that had borne many a storm, and an old sealskin cap, surmounting his shaggy black hair, formed his general equipment. Add a quid of tobacco rolling from side to side of a capacious mouth, a beard of a fortnight's growth, a knowing wink, and an uncouth but good-humoured grin, and you will have a tolerable notion of the outer man of Master Adam.

His inward qualities were pretty much what might be expected from such an exterior—rude, rough, and coarse, but faithful, bold, and honest, and not without a certain touch of fun and good fellowship, and blunt kindness, that rendered him no small favourite with his cronies of the Four Horseshoes, amongst whom his waterman's songs, and sailor's stories (yarns, as he called them) were deservedly popular. His early history was rather a puzzle in the good village of Aberleigh. had been brought by Colonel Talbot to his present situation about ten years back, a stranger in the neighbourhood; and little as in general Adam affected concealment, he appeared to have some amusement in mystifying his neighbours on this point. Never were opinions more various. Some held that he had been a London waterman, and quoted his songs, his dexterity at the oar, and his familiarity with the slang peculiar to the great river, as irrefragable proofs that such had been his vocation. Others asserted that he was an old manof-war's man, citing his long yarns, his proficiency in making and drinking grog, his boldness in battle, and his hatred of the Monsieurs, as convincing testimony in their favour. Others again (but they were his maligners) hinted that well as he liked grog, a drop of neat Cogniac was still more welcome, and insinuated that some of the varns had about them a great air of smuggling; --- whilst another party, more malevolent still, asserted that boldness might belong to other trades as well as to a sailor, and that his skill as a fisherman, and such a subtlety in detecting nets and lines, as had never before been met with in these parts, savoured strongly

of his having at some time or other followed the poaching business himself. This last, in particular, was the observation of his next neighbour, Nanny Sims, a washerwoman, and gossip of high repute, who being a thriving widow of some forty, or belike forty-five, had on his first arrival set her cap, as the phrase is, at Adam, and in affront at his neglect of her charms, was in a small way as comfortably his enemy as heart could desire.

Little recked he of her love or her enmity. On he lived, a bold, bluff, burly bachelor, with his boy Ned, and his dog Neptune, each, after his several way, as burly and shaggy as himself, the terror of water-thieves, and the prime favourite of his master, who, a thorough sportsman, and altogether one of the most complete and admirable specimens that I have ever known of an English country-gentleman, refined by education and travel, set the highest value on his skill as a fisher, and his good management in preserving the fishery. A first-rate favourite was Adam Stokes.

His habitation was, as I have said, beautifully situated at a point of the Kennet, where winding suddenly round an abrupt hill, it flowed beneath a bank so high and precipitous, that but for its verdure it might have passed for a cliff, leaving just room on the bank for a small white cottage, the chimneys of which were greatly over-topped by the woody ridge behind them, while the garden on

one side sloped in natural terraces from the hill to the river, and a narrow orchard on the other was planted ledge above ledge, like a vineyard on the Rhine. Fishing-nets drying on the fine smooth turf, and the boat fastened to a post and swaying in the water, completed the picture.

An unfrequented country road on the other side of the river was my nearest way to Talbot Park, and one day last March, driving thither in my little ponyphaeton, I stopped to observe Adam, who had just caught an enormous pike, weighing, as we afterwards found, above twenty pounds, and after landing it on one side of the water, was busied in repairing a part of his tackle which the struggles of the creature had broken. It was still full of life as it lay on the grass, and appeared to me such a load, that after complimenting Adam (who was of my acquaintance) on the luck that had sent, and the skill that had caught, such a fish, I offered to take it for him to the park.

"Lord bless you, ma'am!" responded Master Stokes, eyeing my slight equipage, and pretty pony, as well as the small lad who was driving me, with some slyness, "Lord help you, ma'am, you've no notion how obstropulous these great fishes be. He'd splash your silk gown all over, and mayhap overset you into the bargain. No, no—I've catched him, and I must manage him—besides, I want to speak to madam. Here, lad," added

he, calling to his boy, who, with Neptune, was standing on the opposite side of the river, watching our colloquy, "gather them violets on the bank; they're always the first in the country; and bring the basket over in the boat to take this fellow to the great house—mind how you pick the flowers, you lubber, I want 'em for madam."

Somewhat amused by seeing how my fair friend's passion for flowers was understood and humoured, even by the roughest of her dependents, I pursued my way to the house, passed the pretty lodge and the magnificent garden, with its hothouses, greenhouses, and conservatories, its fountains and its basins, its broad walks and shady alleys; drove through the noble park, with its grand masses of old forest-trees-oak, and beech, and elm, and tree-like thorns, the growth of centuries, thridded the scattered clumps, about which the dappled deer were lying; skirted the clear lakelet, where waterfowl of all sorts were mingled with stately swans, and finally gained the house, a superb mansion worthy of its grounds, at the door of which I met the colonel, who, pheasant-shooting, and hunting, and coursing being fairly over, intended to solace himself with shooting rabbits, and was sallying forth with his gun in his hand, and a train of long-bodied, crooked-legged, very outlandish-looking dogs at his heels, of a sort called the rabbit-beagle, reckoned very handsome I find in their way, but in my mind pre-eminently ugly. I did not, however, affront my kind host, a person whom every body likes, in right of his frank, open, amiable character, and his delightful manners; I did not insult him by abusing his dogs, but passing with a gracious salutation, we parted—he to his sport, and I to my visit.

If Colonel Talbot be a delightful man, Mrs. Talbot is a thrice delightful woman. To say nothing of the higher qualities for which she is deservedly eminent, I have seldom met with any one who contrives to be at the same time so charming and so witty. She is very handsome, too, and combining her own full-blown and magnificent beauty with her love of that full-blown and beautiful flower, I call her the Queen of the Dahlias,a nickname which she submits to the more readily, as her collection of that superb plant is nearly unrivalled. In March, however, even she, great forcer though she be, can hardly force a dahlia, so that I found her in her drawing-room without her favourite flower, but surrounded by stands of rhododendrons, azaleas, daphnes, pinks, lilies of the valley, and roses without end; and after first admiring and then deprecating her display of forced plants, as forestalling their natural blossoming, and deadening the summer pleasure, quoting to the same effect Shakspeare's fine lines in the Love's Labour LostAt Christmas I no more desire a rose

Than look for snow in May's newfangled shows,
But like of each thing that in season grows\*.

After a little battle on this, an old subject of dispute between us, we fell into talk on other topics, and I soon perceived that my charming hostess was not in her usual spirits.

"But what's the matter, my dear Mrs. Talbot? You say that all friends are well; and I see that the flowers are prosperous in spite of my lecture; and the pets,—pussy purring on the sofa, the swans sailing on the water, and the pied peacock tapping the window at this very moment;—the pets are flourishing like the flowers. What can have happened to vex you?"

- "Enough to have disturbed the patience of Grisildis herself, if Grisildis had ever known the comfort of a favourite waiting-maid. Laurette has given me warning."
- "Laurette! Is it possible! The paragon of filles de chambre! the princess of milliners! the very queen of the toilet! Laurette, so dexterous, so handy, she that
- \* Perhaps in this argument Mrs. Talbot is right and I am wrong; for we can hardly have too many roses. But those parents and instructors who force the delicate plants called children into precocious blossoming, cannot enough study the deep wisdom of the concluding line.



could do not only all that was possible to waiting-women, but all that was impossible! and so attached too! what can be the cause! who can have stolen her from you?"

- " She's going to be married!"
- " To whom?"
- "Heaven knows! she would not tell me his name, but described him as 'un brave garçon.' Somebody in the village, I fancy! some lout of a farmer, or bumpkin of a carpenter. She that cannot speak three words of English, and is as unfit for a farmer's wife as I am. To think of my losing Laurette."

At this point of our dialogue, Master Adam Stokes was announced, and we adjourned into the hall to admire the fish and talk to the fisherman. There stood Adam, cap in hand, more shaggy and ragged than ever, exulting over his enormous fish, and backed by his adherents, Ned and Neptune, whilst the airy Frenchwoman, tricked out as usual in her silk gown, her embroidered apron, her high comb, and her large earrings, stood against a marble table arranging the violets which Ned had brought in a small China cup. I must go to her own language for words to describe the favourite French maid—gentille et jolie seem expressly made for her, and as she stood with an air of consciousness quite unusual to her manner, placing the violets topsy-turvy in her confusion, I thought that I had never seen Laurette

half so attractive. Her lady took no notice of her, but remained in gracious colloquy with the fisherman. At last she turned towards the drawing-room.

- "If you please, ma'am," said Adam, "I'd be greatly obliged to you, if you'd speak a good word for me to his honour." And there he stopped.
- "What about, Adam?" inquired Mrs. Talbot, returning to the middle of the hall.
- "About my marrying, ma'am; if so be the Colonel has no objection;" continued Adam, twirling his cap.
- "Marrying!" rejoined Mrs. Talbot, "all the world seems thinking of marrying! who is the fair lady, Adam? Nanny Sims?"
- "Nanny Sims! not she, indeed, ma'am," resumed Master Stokes. "I don't know who would trouble their heads about such an old hulk, when they might be master of such a tight-made vessel as this!" quoth the fisherman, grinning and jerking his head, and clutching the gown of the pretty Frenchwoman, whilst his faithful adherents, Ned and Neptune, grinned, and jerked, and wagged head and tail in unison.
- "Laurette! do you mean Laurette? you who hate the French, and she who can't speak English?"
- "A fig for her lingo, ma'am. Look what a tight little frigate 'tis! A fig for her lingo!"
  - "Et toi, Laurette! es tu folle?"
  - "Ah de grace, madame! c'est un si brave garçon!"

And outrageous as the union seemed, as incongruous as a match between Caliban and Ariel, the lovers persevered, and the lady, half-provoked and half-amused, consented; and at the month's end they were married, with as fair a prospect of happiness as any couple in the parish.

#### CHRISTMAS AMUSEMENTS.

(No. IV.)

AGAIN there was a wish to see the versatile performer, whose talent, accident, or as Annie said, her spirit of divination, had so strangely disclosed; and on the desire being communicated to Mr. Mortimer it was most readily complied with. He, however, in his turn wanted to stipulate that Annie should keep him in countenance; for in spite of her laughing and her blunders, the blushing little girl had been charming in her graceful awkwardness; but she refused positively, and her sisters, who had no mind for another scene of confusion, upheld her in her resolution, so that she sat on a low stool at her mother's knee, enjoying the performance, and guessing the words, whilst the others, with the usual mixture of criticism and applause, went through the following charades.

1

# CHARADE THE FIRST.

#### SCENE THE FIRST.

A paltry lodging in a country town, RANTER studying a part.

"Yes, Altamont; to-day thy better stars

Are joined to shed their kindest influence on thee." Deuce take the folly of these country managers! A star can't come within fifty miles of them but they must be catching at it, when all the while they have better actors in their own company. Here's this man coming to play Lothario—He play Lothario!—and I must study Horatio, forsooth! a part of fifteen lengths at a day's notice. I to play Horatio! the most dull, prosy, hateful part—I'm sure that I shant know two lines of it.

"Yes, Altamont; to-day thy better stars——"Confound all stars, say I.

"Yes, Altamont-"

There never was so vile a part!

" Yes, Altamont-"

Who's there! interrupting me, when I'm so busy.

# Enter LANDLADY.

Landlady. When will you be pleased to have your dinner, sir?

Rant. I don't care. Don't bore me. Any time. Not at all.

# "Yes, Altamont-"

Landl. Not at all, sir? my stars!

Rant. Stars again! Don't pester me, woman. How do you think I am ever to study my part?

Landl. Lord, sir! I have got as nice a beef-steak as ever was seen—and to hear you say you won't eat it!

Rant. Get the beef-steak, then, there's a good creature; and take yourself off. Have not I told you that I've fifteen lengths to study!

[Exit. LANDLADY.

"Yes, Altamont; to-day thy better stars

Are joined to shed their kindest influence on thee;

Sciolto's noble hand, that raised thee first,"—

Another interruption!

## Enter Maid.

Get away with you! Didn't I tell you that I'm not at home to any body?—

"Yes, Altamont,"-

Maid. Sir, Mrs. Stubbs, the washerwoman,-

Rant. Don't talk to me of washerwomen—

---- " to-day thy better stars,"---

What do you stand staring there for?

Maid. Won't you be pleased to look over your linen, sir?

Rant. No.—"Yes, Alta—"

Maid. Nor to send the money, sir? Two-and-a penny.

Rant. No, I tell you.—" Sciolto's noble hand,"—

Maid. Sir, Mrs. Stubbs wont trust-

Rant. Hang Mrs. Stubbs! and hang you!—Begone, I say.

[Flinging her the money. Exit Maid. I shall never study my part here whilst the world stands. I'll go into the next room, and lock myself in. That's my only chance.—(Goes out repeating to himself,)—"Yes, Altamont, to-day thy better stars."—

SCENE THE SECOND.

# A splendid Library.

MR. MAYNARD enters, speaking to a Servant.

Not at home to any one, excepting Colonel Falkland and Mr. Ellis.—This failure of Bland's great house, however deplorable in itself, at least bids fair to put an end to my troubles as a guardian. Ever since Mary Conway has been under my care, she has been besieged by as many suitors as Penelope. We shall see whether the poor destitute girl will prove as attractive as the rich heiress. Falkland is an ardent lover, Ellis a modest

one; Falkland is enormously rich, Ellis comparatively poor; but whether either——

#### Enter COLONEL FALKLAND.

My dear Colonel, good morning !—I took the liberty of sending for you.

Col. Falk. Most proud and happy to obey your summons. I believe that I am before my time; but where the heart is, you know, Mr. Maynard—How is the fair Mary Conway? I hope she caught no cold in the Park yesterday?

Mr. May. None that I have heard.

Col. Falk. And that she has recovered the fatigue of Tuesday's ball?

Mr. May. She does not complain.

Col. Falk. No. But there is a delicacy, a fragility in her loveliness, that mingles fear of her health with admiration of her beauty.

Mr. May. She is a pretty girl, and a good girl; a very good girl, considering that, in her quality as an heiress, she has been spoilt by the adulation of every one that has approached her ever since she was born.

Col. Falk. Oh, my dear sir, you know not how often I have wished that Miss Conway were not an heiress, that I might have an opportunity of proving to her and to you the sincerity and disinterestedness of my passion.

Mr. May. I am glad to hear you say so.



Col. Falk. I may hope, then, for your approbation and your influence with your fair ward? You know my fortune and family?

Mr. May. Both are unexceptionable.

Col. Falk. The estate which I inherited from my father is large and unencumbered; that which will devolve to me from the maternal side is still more considerable. I am the last of my race, Mr. Maynard; and my mother and aunt are, as you may imagine, very desirous to see me settled. They are most anxious to be introduced to Miss Conway; my aunt, Lady Lucy, more particularly so. Mary Conway, even were she portionless, is the very creature whom they would desire as a relative; the very being to enchant them.

Mr. May. I am extremely glad to hear you say so.

# Enter Mr. Ellis.

Mr. Ellis! Pray be seated.—I sent for you both, gentlemen, as the declared lovers of my ward, Miss Conway, in order to make to you an important communication.

Mr. Ellis. I am afraid that I can guess its import.

Col. Falk. Speak, Mr. Maynard-pray, speak!

Mr. May. Have you heard of the failure of the great firm of Bland and Co.?

Col. Falk. Yes. But what has that to do with Mary Conway?—To the point, my good sir; to the point.

Mr. May. Well, then, to come at once to the point.

Did you never hear, that, though not an ostensible partner, Mr. Conway's large property was lodged in the firm?

Mr. Ellis. I had heard such a report.

Col. Falk. Mr. Conway's property in Bland's house! the house of a notorious speculator! What incredible imprudence!—All?

Mr. May. The whole.

Col. Falk. What miraculous folly!—Then Miss Conway is a beggar?

Mr. May. Whilst I live, Mary Conway can never want a home. But she is now a portionless orphan; and she desired that you, gentlemen, might be apprised of the change of her fortunes with all convenient speed, and assured, that no advantage would be taken of proposals made under circumstances so different.

Mr. Ellis. Oh, how needless an assurance!

Col. Falk. Miss Conway displays a judicious consideration.

Mr. May. I am, however, happy to find, Colonel Falkland, that your affection is so entirely centered on the lovely young woman, apart from her riches, that you will feel nothing but pleasure in an opportunity of proving the disinterestedness of your love.

Col. Falk. Why, it must be confessed, Mr. Maynard,—

Mr. May. Your paternal estate is so splendid as to render you quite independent of fortune in a wife.

Col. Falk. Why, ye-es. But really my estate, what with the times, and one draw-back and another—Nobody knows what I pay in annuities to my father's old servants—In fact, Mr. Maynard, I am not a rich man;—not by any means a rich man.

Mr. May. Then your great expectations from your mother, Lady Sarah, and your aunt, Lady Lucy.

Col. Falk. Yes, but, my dear sir, you have no notion of the aversion which Lady Lucy entertains for unequal matches;—matches where all the money is on one side. They never turn out well, she says; and Lady Lucy is a sensible woman,—a very sensible woman. As far as my observation goes, I must say that I think her right.

Mr. May. In short, then, Colonel Falkland, you no longer wish to marry my ward?

Col. Falk. Why really, my good sir, it is with great regret that I relinquish my pretensions; and if I thought that the lady's affections were engaged——But I am not vain enough to imagine, that with a rival of so much merit—

Mr. Ellis (aside.) Contemptible coxcomb!

Col. Falk. Pray, assure Miss Conway of my earnest wishes for her happiness, and of the sincere interest that

I shall always feel in her welfare.—I have the honour to wish you a good morning.

[Going.

Mr. May. A moment, sir, if you please.—What say you, Mr. Ellis? Have these tidings wrought an equal change in your feelings?

Mr. Ellis. They have indeed wrought a change, sir, and a most pleasant change; since they have given me hope such as I never dared to feel before. God forgive me for being so glad of that which has grieved her! Tell Mary Conway, that for her dear sake I wish that I were richer, but that never shall I wish that she were rich for mine. Tell her that if a fortune adequate to the comforts and elegancies, though not to the splendours, of life, a pleasant country house, a welcoming family, and an adoring husband, can make her happy, I lay them at her feet. Tell her——

Mr. May. My dear fellow, you had far better tell her yourself. I have no doubt but she will accept your disinterested offers, and I shall heartily advise her to do so; but you must make up your mind to a little disappointment.

Mr. Ellis. How? what? How can I be disappointed, so that Miss Conway consents to be mine?

Mr. May. Disappointment is not quite the word. But you will have to encounter a little derangement of your generous schemes. When you take my pretty

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ward, you must e'en take the burden of her riches along with her.

Col. Falk. She is not ruined then?

Mr. May. No, sir. Mr. Conway did at one time place a considerable sum in the firm of Messrs. Bland; but finding the senior partner to be, as you observed, Colonel, a notorious speculator, he prudently withdrew it.

Col. Falk. And this was a mere stratagem?

Mr. May. Why really, sir, I was willing to prove the sincerity of your professions, before confiding to you such a treasure as Mary Conway, and I think that the result has fully justified the experiment. But for your comfort, I don't think she would have had you, even if you had happened to have behaved better. My young friend here had made himself a lodgement in her heart, of which his present conduct proves him to be fully worthy. I have the honour to wish you a very good morning.—Come, Ellis; Mary's in the music-room!

[Exeunt.

#### SCENE THE THIRD.

# A fashionable Morning Room.

Mr. and Mrs. Apperley at breakfast.—Mr. Apperley ley lays down the Newspaper.

Mr. App. Mrs. Apperley, my dear, I want to speak to you on a subject, on which as a mother, you have

every right to be consulted; the more especially, as from your excellent sense, I have no doubt of your being entirely of my opinion. John grows a great boy.

Mrs. App. Poor fellow! Yes. He'll be ten years old the fifteenth of next month. Time slips away, Mr. Apperley.

Mr. App. Ten years old next month! It's high time that he should be taken from Mr. Lynn's. These preparatory schools are good things for little boys; but a lad of ten years old requires to be more tightly kept.

Mrs. App. Just my opinion, Mr. Apperley. The sooner you remove the poor boy from Mr. Lynn's the better. They don't take half the care of him that they ought to do. Only yesterday when I called there, I found him playing at cricket without his hat—really without his hat!—in the middle of that wind, and so delicate as John is too!

Mr. App. Delicate! Pshaw! There never was any thing the matter with the child but your coddling, Mrs. Apperley; and Eton will soon cure him of that.

Mrs. App. Eton! Do you mean to send John to Eton? Mr. App. To be sure I do.

Mrs. App. Our sweet John, our only son, our only child, to Eton?

Mr. App. Certainly.

Mrs. App. Never with my consent, I promise you, Mr. Apperley.

Mr. App. And why not, Mrs. Apperley?

Mrs. App. Just look at the boys; that's all. Did not the Duchess tell me herself that the poor little Marquis came home with only one skirt to his jacket, and his brother Lord Edward with scarcely a shoe to his foot? There's a pretty plight for you, Mr. Apperley! Think of our John with his toes through his shoes, and half a skirt to his jacket!

Mr. App. Pshaw!

Mrs. App. Then such rude graceless pickles as they come back, with their manners more out at elbows than their clothes.

Mr. App. Pshaw!

Mrs. App. Then the dangers they run!—to be killed by a cricket-ball, or drowned in the Thames, or—

Mr. App. Pshaw! Mrs. Apperley. Where now, in your wisdom, would you send the boy?

Mrs. App. To Dr. Courtly.

Mr. App. And pray who is Dr. Courtly?

Mrs. App. Did you never hear of Dr. Courtly's establishment for young gentlemen?—never hear of Dr. Courtly!—So elegant, so comfortable, taken such care of; linen clean twice a-day; hair curled every morning; almond paste to wash their hands; china dinner-service; silver forks, napkins, and finger-glasses—Just ten miles off, only fourteen pupils, and happens to have a vacancy. Pray send John to Dr. Courtly, Mr. Apperley.

Mr. App. And so make a coxcomb of the boy before his time! Not I, truly. Leave the hair-curling and the almond-paste to the instinct of eighteen. In the mean while I choose that he should learn Latin and Greek; and for that purpose I shall send him to Eton.

Mrs. App. Lord, Mr. Apperley! what is a man the better for that nonsense? You are an Etonian yourself, and pray tell me now what good has your scholarship ever done you? What use have you made of it?

Mr. App. Hem! That's a point which ladies can't understand, and had better not talk about, Mrs. Apperley?

Mrs. App. Have you ever, during the eleven years that we have been married, read a single page of Greek or Latin, Mr. Apperley?

Mr. App. Hem! Why, really, my dear-

Mrs. App. Or indeed a page of any thing, except the newspapers and the Waverley novels?

Mr. App. How can you say so, Mrs. Apperley?

Mrs. App. Why, what do you read?

Mr. App. Hem! The Quarterly—I generally look over the Quarterly; and Pepys—I dipped into Pepys; and the magazines, Mrs. Apperley! Don't I turn over the magazines as regularly as the month comes? And, in short, if you could but imagine the attic zest, the classical relish, with which a sound scholar—but this, as I said before, is what you ladies can't understand, and

had better not talk about. John shall go to Eton; that's my determination.

Mrs. App. He shall go to Dr. Courtly's; that's mine. How can you be so barbarous, Mr. Apperley, as to think of sending John to such a place as Eton, subject as he is to chilblains, and the winter coming on? Now the Doctor has studied surgery, and dresses—

Mr. App. Hang the Doctor, and hang John's chilblains! The boy shall go to Eton.—That's my last word, Mrs. Apperley.

Mrs. App. If he does, he'll be dead in a week. But he shan't go to Eton—that's my resolution. And we shall see who'll have the last word, Mr. Apperley—we shall see!

[Exeunt separately.

### CHARADE THE SECOND.

SCENE THE FIRST.

An Apartment in an Artist's House.

SIR GEORGE LUDLOW, MR. DELAVAL, a Servant.

Delaval. Engaged with a lady, you say? Be so good as to give your master my card. I shant detain him an instant.

[Exit Servant.

Sir George. And pray, my good friend, are you about to sit for your portrait? And is it to consult on costume and attitude that you have brought me hither?

Del. With no such intention, I assure you.

Sir Geo. You are not going to sit?

Del. No.

Sir Geo. Nor your pretty sister?

Del. Nor my pretty sister.

Sir Geo. And yet you send for so fashionable an artist as Allingham, when engaged with a sitter, with as little remorse as you would feel in summoning me or any other idle gentleman of your acquaintance. You wealthy heirs have no notion of the value of time. Engaged with a lady too!

Del. Tush, man, tush! Allingham's a good fellow and my friend, and expects the summons. In short, I may as well confess at once what I have been trying to muster courage to tell you the whole morning, that the lady who is now sitting to him is one in whom I am particularly interested.

Sir Geo. Particularly interested! That means in love, I suppose. And the fair lady, is she particularly interested in you?

Del. I fear me, no.

Sir Geo. Well, for a man of your age, figure, and fortune, that avowal has a laudable modesty. But there is no aversion to overcome, I hope? No difficulty beyond that which a lover likes to vanquish?

Del. I trust not. In good truth, I believe her to be still ignorant of my passion. I met her in Paris;

danced with her at two or three balls; escorted her to two or three show-houses; lost my heart; followed her to England; and have been in full chase of the divinity for the last fortnight, without being once able to catch sight of her! Never was mortal so unlucky. As fast as I pursued her to one place, so sure was she to be flown to another. At last I heard accidentally that Allingham was painting her portrait, and arranged with him to be let in by mistake this morning whilst she was sitting.

Sir Geo. And brought me with you to share your transgression, and spare your modesty?

Del. Even so.

Sir Geo. And the fair damsel's name?

Del. Is the Lady Elizabeth Delancy.

Sir Geo. Ah! she's a sweet creature that! You could not have chosen better. But why not make proposals to the father at once, and so save yourself all farther trouble?

Del. Because I wish first to make myself acceptable to the daughter. What can Allingham be about! Ah! here's the servant.

[Enter the Servant, who gives a note to Mr. Delayal and leaves the room.

Sir Geo. A note! Only a note! What's the matter? You look as if some great calamity had befallen you.

Del. Disappointed again! She's gone. Allingham writes me word that she and old Mrs. Delmont exchanged their times of sitting, and she—my she—the only she of the world—has been gone these two hours. Was ever mortal so unlucky?

Sir Geo. Never fret, man! you'll be more fortunate another time.

Del. I tell you, Ludlow, I never shall meet her. This is just what happened to me at Almack's, at the Opera, at the British Gallery, at a dozen parties. I no sooner go into a room at one door than she leaves it by another. There's a spell over me. We never shall meet.

Sir Geo. Pshaw! Pshaw!

Del. There's a spell upon me, I tell you? never was man so unfortunate! Too late again! [Execunt.

#### SCENE THE SECOND.

### DELAVAL'S House.

SIR GEORGE LUDLOW, and Mr. DELAVAL, reading a letter.

Sir George. What can there be in that letter to excite such transports? You lovers are strange people. Yesterday, a little bit of written paper plunged you into the deepest affliction; to-day, another scrap throws you into ecstasies. Is that note from Allingham?

Delaval, Yes.

Sir Geo. Another appointment of course; but how that can so entrance you; and what it is that you are pressing to your heart at that rate——

Del. Read.

Sir Geo. (reading.) "Dear Delaval—Lady Delancy and Lady Elizabeth will be with me to-morrow at twelve, for the last sitting. Come at two, and I'll contrive, if I can, to leave you with them. At all events, you will have the satisfaction of seeing your goddess and her portrait. Ever yours. W. Allingham." Well?

Del. Read on; read on.

Sir Geo. (reading.) "P.S.—Lady Delancy, thinking that I had not succeeded in catching the very peculiar hue of the hair, has sent the enclosed as a pattern." Ho! ho! one of the auburn ringlets! Now I understand.

Del. Look at it, Ludlow; is it not beautiful? Auburn indeed! the true, the only auburn! Bright and dark as the rind of the horse-chesnut, but with a flickering light, that seems to turn each particular hair into a thread of gold. Look! look!

Sir. Geo. I see.

Del. How completely this long wavy ringlet identifies her loveliness! If I had never seen Elizabeth, I could have sworn that she to whom this lock belonged must be beautiful; must have the rich yet delicate com-

plexion, coloured like the flowers of the balsam; the dark grey eye; the ruby lip; the bright smile; the look of life and youth; the round yet slender figure—What are you laughing at, Ludlow?

Sir Geo. I laugh, my good friend, because I can't help it. We all know that Lady Elizabeth is a charming girl; but as to the beauty which you have been pleased to conjure up as the necessary appendage to one shining curl—Don't be angry though, Delaval; I'll be as true and as serviceable to you as a sadder friend; for I'll go with you to-morrow, and hold the Countess in chat, whilst you talk to her fair daughter. She's a nice person herself is Lady Delancy. I used to stand very well with her before she went abroad, and may be useful now.

Del. Thank ye! thank ye!

Sir Geo. And now I'll leave you, to meditate on the "loveliness of love-locks." Good-bye t'ye. "And beauty draws us by a single hair." Good morrow!

[Exit.

SCENE THE THIRD.

## An Artist's Gallery.

LADY DELANCY, LADY ELIZABETH, SIR GEORGE LUD-LOW, and DELAVAL.

Lady Del. Considering it then merely as an effort of art, you like the picture, gentlemen?

Sir Geo. I, madam, think it a masterpiece. Mr. Delaval complains that it is less fair than the fair original. To me it seems that the artist has accomplished all that painting can do for beauty, by seizing and immortalizing one lovely moment.

Lady Eliz. It's a pretty piece of flattery, certainly. Del. Flattery! Flatter you!

Lady Del. Yes; the likeness is flattering, that must be confessed, and, perhaps, not the less precious to a fond mother for that qualification. But what pleases me most in the picture, and would please me were all partiality out of the question, is the poetical feeling that it displays and embodies. No one would ever guess that figure to be a portrait. Standing as she does in that old-fashioned terrace-garden, with her hair hanging down her neck in those simple natural ringlets, and that rich antique costume, I can scarcely myself fancy that it is meant for my Elizabeth, so much more does it resemble one of the creations of Shakspeare or of Beaumont and Fletcher, than a young lady of the present day.-Don't you think so, Sir George? Beatrice, for instance; for there is a little air of sauciness mixed with innocent gaiety in the expression-Beatrice, just before Hero unfolds her plot.

Del. Oh, happy, thrice happy the Benedict!

Lady Del. Or the pretty coquette, Anne Page—
turning away from Master Slender.

Lady Eliz. No, no, mamma—not Anne Page. We have no Master Slenders now-a-days. Have we, Mr. Delaval?

Del. I could almost enact the part with such a ladylove, provided she would promise that there should be no Master Fenton in the play,

Sir Geo. To me, madam, the figure rather conveys the idea of Emily in the garden—Fletcher's Emily, when the very sight of her beauty from their prison-window stirred up such feud between The Two Noble Kinsmen.

Del. (To Lady Eliz.) No wonder that Palamon and Arcite loved the prison that blessed them with such sights.

Sir Geo. You see, too, that she has a rose in her hand, Lady Delancy, and you remember the exquisite lines by which, in that matchless scene, she describes the flower?

Lady Del. Can you repeat them?

Sir Geo. I'll try. You'll pardon my blunders.

"Of all flowers

Methinks a rose is best.

It is the very emblem of a maid;
For, when the west wind courts her gentily,
How modestly she blows, and paints the sun
With her chaste blushes; when the North comes near her,
Rude and impatient, then, like Chastity,
She locks her beauties in her bud again,
And leaves him to base briers."

Lady Del. Beautiful lines! I did not know that you were so poetical, Sir George. You must give us the pleasure of seeing you oftener in Berkeley Square.—Come, Elizabeth.—Mr. Delaval, Lord Delancy will be happy to renew his Parisian acquaintance with you, if you will favour us by a call. Come, my dear.

Sir Geo. Allow me to attend your ladyship.

[Exeunt LADY DELANCY and SIR GEORGE.

Lady Eliz. What could put Anne Page into mamma's head? and what could make you think of enacting Master Slender?

Del. Benedict, Fenton, Palamon, Arcite, even Master Slender,—any thing to have the privilege of calling myself your servant.

Lady Eliz. But we poor damsels have no servants now-a-days.

Del. Always I am yours,

Lady Eliz. Nonsense, Mr. Delaval! Mamma will be waiting for me.

Del. Always your servant and your slave.

[Exeunt.

### THE HAYMAKERS.

#### A COUNTRY STORY.

Amongst the country employments of England, none is so delightful to see or to think of as haymaking. comes in the pleasantest season, amidst a green, and flowery, and sunshiny world; it has for scene the prettiest places, - park, or lawn, or meadow, or upland pasture; and withal it has more of innocent merriment, more of the festivity of an out-of-door sport, and less of the drudgery and weariness of actual labour, than any other of the occupations of husbandry. One looks on it, pretty picture as it is, without the almost saddening sympathy produced by the slow and painful toil of the harvest field, and, moreover, one looks on it much oftener. A very little interval of dressed garden shall divide a great country mansion from the demesne, where hay-cocks repose under noble groups of oaks and elms, or mingle their fragrance with the snowy wreaths of the

acacia, or the honeyed tassels of the lime; and the fair and delicate lady who cannot tell wheat from barley, and the mincing fine gentleman who " affects an ignorance if he have it not," shall yet condescend not merely to know hay when they see it, but even to take some interest in the process of getting it up. In short, at the most aristocratic country tables, from the high sheriff of the county to the lord-lieutenant, hay is a permitted subject; and the state of the clouds, or of the weatherglass, shall be inquired into as diligently, and be listened to with as much attention, as speculations on the St. Leger or the Derby, discussions on the breed of pheasants, or calculations on a contested election. very naturally felt to be a gentlemanly topic, since from the richest to the poorest every country gentleman is a hay-owner.

I have been used all my life to take a lively interest, and even so much participation as may belong to a mere spectator, in this pleasant labour; for I cannot say that I ever actually handled the fork or the rake. In former times our operations were on a grand scale, since the lawn before and around our old house, and the park-like paddock behind, were of such an extent as to make the getting in of the crop an affair of considerable moment in a pecuniary point of view. Now we have in our own hands only two small fields, the one a meadow of some three acres, about a mile off, the other a bit of

upland pasture not much bigger, and rather nearer. The consequence of which diminution of property is. that I am ten times more interested in our small possession than ever I was in our large demesne, and that the produce of these two little bits of land—the minikin rick, not much better than a haycock itself, all of which is to be consumed by that especial friend of mine, our pretty frisky cream coloured horse\*, of whom it is every day predicted that he will break our necks—appears much more important in my eyes than the mountains of dried grass, which after feeding some dozen horses, and half a dozen cows, were sold out amongst inn-keepers, coach proprietors, cattle dealers, and hay-buyers of all sorts, and sometimes in a plentiful year had even the honour to be advertised in a country newspaper, put up to public sale, puffed by the auctioneer, abused by the bidders, talked about, and lied about, and finally knocked down by the hammer-as great a piece of promotion as a hay-rick can well come to.

This trick of estimating one's possessions in an inverse ratio to their real value is, I believe, strange as the assertion may seem, no uncommon freak of that whimsical, but good for *something* piece of perversity called human nature. In my own case I can besides claim in

\* Now, alas! no more! Would that the beauty were alive again, even if he did put our lives in jeopardy! I shall never entertain so strong a personal friendship for any steed.

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mitigation for the mistake (if mistake it be to take an interest in any thing innocent!) the extreme beauty of the two patches of ground on which grows the hay in question.

One of these grassplots is a breezy, airy, upland field, abutting on the southernmost nook of an open common, forming, so to say, one side of a sunny bay, half filled with a large clear pond of bright water, water always bright; the first swallows of the year are regularly seen there; a great farm-house with its bustling establishment directly opposite; a winding road leading across the green; and trees, cottages, children, horses, cows, sheep, and geese, scattered around in the gavest profusion—a living and moving picture. The most populous street of a populous city gives a less vivid idea of habitation, than the view from the gate, or from the high bank, feathered with broom and hazel-for the fence consists rather of a ditch than of a hedge, the field being as it were moated—of that lightsome and cheerful bit of pasture land.

The more distant meadow is prettier still; it has no regular approach, and is reached only through a chain of fields belonging to different neighbours, whose gates, close locked upon all other occasions, open only to admit the ponderous hay waggon, creaking under its burthen, and the noisy procession of pitchers and rakers by which it is accompanied. Surrounded by close and

high hedges, richly studded by hedge-row timber, no spot can be more completely shut out from the world than this small meadow. A stream of considerable variety and beauty winds along one end, fringed on each margin by little thickets of copse wood, hawthorn. and hazel, mixed with trees of a larger growth, and clothed, intertwisted, matted, by garlands of wild rose and wild honevsuckle; whilst here and there a narrow strip of turf intervenes between these natural shrubberies and the sparkling, glittering, babbling stream, which runs so clearly over its narrow bed that every shoal of minnows is visible as they pass. Every vagary that a nameless brooklet well can play does this brook show off in its short course across the end of our meadow: now driven rapidly through a narrow channel by the curvature of the banks, fretting, and fuming, and chafing over the transparent pebbles; now creeping gently between clusters of the rich willow herb, and golden flag; now sleeping quietly in a wider and deeper pool, where the white water-lily has found room for its dark leaves and its snowy flowers, and where those quiet but treacherous waters seem about to undermine the grassy margent, which already overhangs them, and to lay bare the roots of the old willows. A tricksy streamlet is that nameless brook, and on the banks of that tricksy stream lies the scene of our little story.

Last summer was, as most of my readers probably

remember, one of no small trial to haymakers in general, the weather being what is gently and politely termed "unsettled," which in this pretty climate of ours, during " the leafy month of June," may commonly be construed into cloudy, stormy, drizzly, cold. In this instance the silky, courtly, flattering epithet, being translated, could hardly mean other than wet-fixed, determined, settled rain. From morning to night the clouds were dropping; roses stood tottering on their stalks; strawberries lay sopping in their beds; cherries and currants hung all forlorn on their boughs, with the red juice washed out of them; gravel roads turned into sand; pools into ponds; ditches into rivulets; rivers overflowed their channels; and that great evil a summer flood appeared inevitable. "The rain it raineth every day" was the motto for the month. Sheridan's wicked interpolation in Mr. Coleridge's tragedy, "drip, drip, drip, there's nothing here but dripping," seemed made expressly for the season. Cut or uncut, the grass was spoiling; the more the hay was made, the clearer it appeared that it would never make to any purpose; the poor cattle shook their ears as if aware of an impending scarcity; salt, the grand remedy for sopped hay, rose in the market; farmers fretted; and gentlemen fumed 1.

1 It is well if they did no worse. A fair young friend of mine, whose father, one of the most accomplished persons that I have



So passed the "merry month of June." Towards the beginning of July, however, matters mended. new moon made her appearance in the world, and that great stranger the sun, as if out of compliment to his fair cold sister, ventured out of the clouds to salute her across the sky, one evening just before his usual time of setting, and even continued the civility by leaving behind him such a glow of purple rosiness, and such a line of golden light, as illumined the whole horizon, and gave the most gracious promise for the ensuing day -a promise unusually well kept for so great a personage, that is to say, not quite forgotten. The weather, to be sure, was not quite perfect,-when was the weather ever known to be so? it was on the contrary of that description which is termed "catching;" but still there were intervals of brightness; the rain was less heavy; the sun did shine sometimes; and even when he refused to show that resplendent face of his, a light stirring breeze answered all hay-making purposes almost as well. In short, between wind and sunshine, we managed to get in our upland crop, with little danger and less damage, and encouraged by that success, and by the

ever known, and by no means addicted to the use of naughty words on common occasions, rented about thirty acres of water-meadow, known by the name of "the moors," used always to call the hay-making time his "swearing month." He was wont to laugh at the expression—but I never heard him deny that it was true.

slow gentle rising of the weather-glass which the knowing in such matters affirm to be much more reliable than a sudden and violent jump of the quicksilver, we gave orders to cut the little mead without delay, and prepared for a day's hay-making in that favourite spot.

·We were not without other encouragements with respect to the weather. The sun himself had had the goodness to make "a golden set," and a rosy dawning, and those vegetable barometers the scarlet pimpernel in the hedge rows, and the purple Venus's looking-glass in the garden, threw open their rich cups to receive his earliest beams, with a fulness of expansion seldom shown by those, I had almost said, sentient flowers, when there is the slightest appearance of rain. good neighbour the shoemaker, too, an in-door oracle, whose speculations on the atmosphere are not very remarkable for their correctness, prognosticated wet; whilst our other good neighbour, farmer Bridgwater, an out-of-door practical personage, whose predictionsand it is saying much for them-are almost as sure to come true as the worthy cordwainer's to prove false, boldly asseverated that the day would prove fine, and made his preparations and mustered his troops (for farmer Bridgwater is generalissimo in our hay-field) with a vigour and energy that would have become a higher occasion. He set six men on to mowing by a little after sun-rise, and collected fourteen efficient hay-

makers by breakfast time. Fourteen active haymakers for our poor three acres! not to count the idle assistants; we ourselves, with three dogs and two boys to mind them, advisers who came to find fault and look on, babies who came to be nursed, children who came to rock the babies, and other children who came to keep the rockers company and play with the dogs; to say nothing of this small rabble, we had fourteen able-bodied men and women in one hay-field, besides the six mowers, who had got the grass down by noon, and, finding the strong beer good and plentiful, magnanimously volunteered to stay and help to get in the crop. N.B. This abundance of aid is by no means so extravagant as it seems, especially in catching weather. Beer, particularly in country affairs, will go twice as far as money, and if discreetly administered (for we must not make even haymakers quite tipsy) really goes as near to supply the place of the sun as any thing well can do. In our case the good double X was seconded by this bright luminary, and our operations prospered accordingly.

Besides being a numerous, ours was a merry group, very merry and very noisy; for amongst the country people, as amongst children, those two words may almost be reckoned synonymous. There was singing that might pass for screaming; laughter that burst forth in peals and in shouts; and talking in every variety of key,

from the rough bluff commanding halloo of farmer Bridgwater, issuing his orders from one end of the field to another, to the shrill cry of dame Wilson's baby, which seemed to pierce upwards and cleave the very sky. A mingled buzz of talking was, however, the predominant sound, talking of which little could be collected except a general expression of happiness, dame Wilson's roaring infant being with one exception the only dissatisfied person in the field.

Nobody could imagine the joyous din of that little place. A "jovial crew" they were, though by no means "merry beggars;" for our haymakers were for that profession persons of respectability, rather indeed amateurs than professors,—saving perhaps dame Wilson and her set of boys and girls, who might be accounted poor, and a certain ragged Irishman called Jerry, who comes over every year harvesting, and is a general favourite with high and low; with these small drawbacks (N.B. dame Wilson is a mountain of a woman, at least five feet in the girth, and Jerry a maypole of a man who stands six feet three without his shoes,) with these trifling exceptions, our troop of haymakers might really pass for people of substance.

First came the commander-in-chief, farmer Bridgwater, a hearty sturdy old bachelor, rough and bluff and merry and kind, a great although a general admirer of our pretty lasses, to whom his blunt compliments and rustic raillery, of which the point lay rather in a knowing wink, a sly turn of the head, and a peculiar dryness of manner, than in the words, added to his unfailing goodnature, rendered him always welcome.

Next in the list figures our respectable neighbour, Aaron Keep the shoemaker, who came to help us and to watch the weather. He is an excellent person is Aaron Keep, and he came, as he said, to help us; and I dare say he would have been very sorry if the hay had been quite spoiled; nevertheless, having predicted that it would rain, I cannot help thinking he considered it a little hard that no rain came. The least little shower, just to confirm his prognostics, would have made him happy, and he kept watching the clouds, and hoping and foretelling a thunderstorm; but the clouds were obstinate, and the more he predicted that a storm would come, the more it stayed away.

Then arrived Master Wheatley, our worthy neighbour the wheelwright, who, being also parish constable, might have abated the noise if he himself had not been the noiseist. I think he came to please his daughter Mary, a smiling airy damsel of thirteen, who never made hay before in her life. How enraptured the little girl was with the holiday! My dog Dash was the only creature in the field gay enough to keep pace with her frolics. They were playmates during the whole day.

Mine host of the Rose was also present, that model

of all village landlords, mine host in his red waistcoat; and he also brought with him his pretty daughters, lasses of eighteen and twenty, who care no more for poor Dash than I do for a wax doll; I dare say they don't even know that he's a spaniel. Lucy had been to London this spring, and brought home a beau whom she had picked up there as a visitor to her papa, and, our hav-field being a good place for love-making, there too was he, displaying in handling a prong all the awkwardness that might be expected from a Cheapside haberdasher accustomed to the yard. He laughed at himself, however, with a very good grace, and seemed a well conditioned and well behaved person, his misfortune of cockneyism notwithstanding. They said that miss Lucy would soon leave the Rose and take to measuring ribbons herself. Patty too, the round-faced, rosycheeked, fair-haired, younger sister, my favourite (but that is a secret, for both are equally civil, and, as far as I know, equally good; I would not make any difference in the world, only-Patty is my favourite;) Patty, said the world—the village world, was also not unlikely to leave the Rose, though for an abode only two doors removed from it; Mr. George Waring, our smart young saddler, having, they affirmed, won her heart; but upon looking out for Patty and George, thinking to find them engaged as the other couple were, what was my astonishment to see the poor little lass, her smiles gone and her roses faded, moping under the hedge alone, rather making believe to rake than actually raking; whilst Mr. George Waring was tossing about the hay in company with the handsome brunette Sally Wheeler, who was just (as I remembered to have heard) come home from service to be married, and looked prodigiously as if the young saddler was her intended spouse. Nothing was ever more suspicious. He looked brighter and gayer than ever, and so did Sally, and for certain they were talking of something interesting, something at which the gentleman smiled and the lady blushed, talking so earnestly that they even forgot to toss the hay about, and that farmer Bridgwater's loudest reprimand, although it startled every one else in the field, was apparently unheard by either of them.

"Alas! I fear Mr. George Waring will play poor Patty false," was my involuntary thought, as I glided amongst the thickets by the side of the stream, and established myself in a verdant nook quite out of sight of the gay scene I had quitted, from which I was parted by a natural shrubbery of honeysuckle and wild roses, covered with blossoms and over-canopied by the spreading branches of a large oak. A pleasant seat was that green bank, with the clear water flowing at my feet, gay with the yellow flag, the white lily, and the blue forgetme-not, and fragrant with the rich tufts of the elegant meadow-sweet, mingling its delicious odour with that of

the wild rose, the honeysuckle, and the new mown hay. A pleasant seat was that turfy bank, and, as the hay-makers adjourned to the farther end of the field to dinner, a quiet one; until suddenly I heard first a deep sigh, and then two voices, from the other side of the oak-tree. I listened with somewhat of curiosity, but more of interest, to the following dialogue:—

- "Why, my queen," said the bluff good humoured voice of farmer Bridgwater, "what are you moping here for? And what have you done with your rosy cheeks? A'nt you well?"
  - "Yes," answered the sighing Patty.
- "Go to dinner, then," responded the generalissimo of the hay-field.
  - "No," sighed the damsel; "I'd rather stay here."
- "Shall Lucy bring you something to eat?" pursued the good farmer.
  - " No."
  - " Or your father?"
  - " No."
  - "Or Aaron Keep? I see he has done."
  - " No."
  - "Or little Mary Wheatley? she'll be here like a bird."
- "No, I don't want any dinner, thank you;" and then came a deep sigh,—such a sigh!
- "Or I myself?" continued the honest farmer, not at all diverted from his purpose.

- "No. It's very good of you," said Patty, half crying, "and I am very much obliged—but—"
- "Perhaps you'd rather George Waring should bring it?" pursued the pertinacious inquirer, with a slight change of voice. "I'll go and send him directly."
- "Don't think of such a thing," interrupted Patty, breathlessly; "he's engaged."
- "No," chuckled the farmer, "that business is over; Sally and he have settled the wedding-day, and I have recommended you for bridemaid."
  - " Me!"
- "Aye, you! One wedding leads to another. Wednesday week is to be the day; and after George Waring has given Sally to his brother Tom, he'll have an excellent opportunity for courting you."
- "Tom! Tom Waring! Of whom are you speaking?"
- "Of George's brother, to be sure, and Sally's beau. There he is, just come into the field. Did you never hear of Tom Waring? He only arrived from Andover last night, where Sally and he have been living next door to each other; and now they are going to marry and settle, as true lovers should. Why, what's the girl crying for?" exclaimed the good farmer, "crying and smiling, and blushing, and looking so happy! Did you think George was making love to her in his own proper

person, you goosecap? Will you come to dinner now, you simpleton? you'd better, or I'll tell."

- " Oh farmer Bridgwater!"
- "Wipe your eyes and come to dinner, or I'll send George Waring to fetch you; come along, I say."
- "Oh farmer Bridgwater!"—and off they marched; and the next I saw of the hay-makers, George and Patty were at work together, and so were Tom and Sally, looking as happy all the four as ever people could do in this world.

#### THE

# FISHERMAN IN HIS MARRIED STATE.

When last I had seen Master Stokes the fisherman, in his bachelor condition, it was in the week when February ends and March begins, when the weather was as bluff and boisterous as his own bluff and boisterous self; when the velvet buds were just sprouting on the sallow, the tufted tassels hanging from the hazel, and the early violet and "rathe primrose" peeping timidly forth from sunny banks and sheltered crevices, as if still half afraid to brave the stormy sky.

The next time that I passed by the banks of the Kennet was in the lovely season which just precedes the merry month of May. The weather was soft and balmy, the sky bright above, the earth fair below; the turf by the road-side was powdered with daisies, the budding hedgerows gay with the white ochil, the pansy, and the wild geranium; the orchards hung with their

own garlands of fruit-blossoms, waving over seas of golden daffodils; the coppices tapestried with pansies, ground-ivy, and wood-anemone, whilst patches of the delicate wood-sorrel were springing under the holly brake and from the roots of old beech-trees; and the meadows were literally painted with cowslips, orchises, the brilliant flowers of the water-ranunculus, the chequered fritillary, and the enamelled wild hyacinth. The river went dancing and sparkling along, giving back in all its freshness the tender green of the landscape, and the bright and sunny sky; birds were singing in every bush; bees and butterflies were on the wing, and myriads of water-insects added their pleasant sound to the general harmony of nature. It was Spring in all its loveliness, and never is Spring more lovely than in our Kennet meadows.

The Fisherman's hut did not disgrace the beauty of the picture. The white cottage, nested in the green bank, with its hanging garden full of stocks and wall-flowers, its blooming orchard, and its thin wreath of grey smoke sailing up the precipitous hill, and lost amid the overhanging trees, looked like the very emblem of peace and comfort. Adam and his dog Neptune were standing in the boat, which Master Stokes's stout arm was pushing from shore with a long pole, nodding a farewell to his wife, and roaring at the top of his stentorian voice his favourite stave of "Rule Britannia;"

Laurette, on her part, was seated at the open door of the cottage, trim as a bride, with her silk gown, her large ear-rings, her high comb, and her pretty apron, her dress contrasting strangely with her employment, which was no other than darning her husband's ponderous and unwieldy hose, but with a face radiant with happiness and gaiety, as her light and airy voice sung the light and airy burden of a song in high favour among the soubrettes of Paris.

> C'est l'amour, l'amour, l'amour, Qui fait le monde à la ronde; Et chaque jour, à son tour, Le monde fait l'amour.

"C'est l'amour, l'amour, l'amour," came ringing across the water in every pause of her husband's mighty and patriotic chant, mingled with the shrill notes of Ned, who was bird's-nesting on the hill-side peeping into every furze-bush for the five speckled eggs of the grey linnet, and whistling "Oh no, we never mention her" with all his might.

It was a curious combination, certainly, and yet one that seemed to me to give token of much happiness; and on questioning my friend Mrs. Talbot, the charming Queen of the Dahlias\* frankly admitted, that however

\* She has fairly taken to the title, as witness a note which I have received from her, signed "Dahlia Regina."

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it might turn out eventually, Laurette's match did at present appear to have produced more comfort to both parties than could have been anticipated from so preposterous a union. "Adam adores her," pursued Mrs. Talbot, "spends all the money he can come by in sailorlike finery, red ribbons, and yellow gowns, which Laurette has too good a wardrobe to need, and too much taste to wear; can't pass within a yard of her without a loving pinch of her pretty round cheek, and swears by every seaman's oath that ever was invented, that she's the neatest-built vessel, with the comeliest figure-head, that ever was launched. And, incredible as it seems, Laurette loves him; delights in his rough kindness, his boldness, and his honesty; calls him still un brave garçon; enters into his humour; studies his comfort; has learnt more English during her six weeks marriage than in six years that she lived with me; and has even advanced so far as to approach, as nearly as a French tongue may do, to the pronunciation of her own name Stokes—a terrible trial to Gallic organs. In short," continued Mrs. Talbot, "of a very foolish thing, it has turned out better than might have been expected; Adam's adherents, Ned and Neptune, fairly idolize their new mistress; poor thing, her kindness, and good-nature. and gaiety, were always most delightful; and Ned is, she assures me, a very handy boy in the house, does all the dirty work, dusts and scrubs, and washes, and cooks,

and trots about in a pair of high pattens and a checked apron, just exactly like a maid of all-work. I send Gilbert to her almost every day with one trifle or another, sometimes a basket of provisions, sometimes my reversionary flowers, (for Laurette can't live without flowers) and on the whole I really think she will do very well."

This account was most satisfactory; but happening again to pass Laurette's cottage in the bowery month of June, I saw cause to fear that a change had passed over the pretty Frenchwoman's prospects. Outwardly the picture was as bright, or brighter than ever. It was summer, gay, smiling summer. The hawthorn buds in the hedgerows were exchanged for the full-blown blossoms of the wayfaring tree\*, whose double circle of white stars, regular as if cut with a stamp, forms so beautiful a cluster of flowerets, and contrasts so gaily with the deep pink of the wild rose, and the pale, but graceful garlands of the woodbine; the meadows had, indeed, lost their flowery glory, and were covered partly

<sup>•</sup> For some charming stanzas to the Wayfaring-tree (remarkable also for its dark, currant-shaped leaf, with a pale cottony lining, which produces a singular effect when turned up by the wind)—for some admirable verses to this elegant wild shrub, see Mr. Howitt's Book of the Seasons, one of the most interesting and delightful works on natural history that has appeared since White's Selborne.

with rich swathes of new-cut grass, and partly with large haycocks, dappling the foreground with such depth and variety of light and shadow; but the river's edge was gay as a garden with flags and water-lilies, and the pendent bunches of the delicate snowflake, the most elegant of aquatic plants; and Laurette's garden itself, one bright bed of pinks, and roses, and honeysuckles, and berry-bushes, with their rich transparent fruit, might almost have vied in colour and fragrance with that of her mistress. The change was not in the place, but in the inhabitants.

Adam was employed in landing a net full of fish. perch, roach, and dace, such a haul as ought to have put any fisherman into good humour, but which certainly had had no such effect on the present occasion. He looked as black as a thunder-cloud, swore at the poor fish as he tossed them on the bank, called Ned a lubber, and when, in a fit of absence, he from mere habit resumed his patriotic ditty, shouted "Britons never will be slaves," with such a scowl at his poor foreign wife, that it could only be interpreted into a note of defiance. She, on her side, was still working at her cottage-door, or rather sitting there listlessly with her work (a checked shirt of her churlish husband's) in her lap, her head drooping, and the gay air of "C'est l'amour," exchanged for a plaintive romance, which ran, as well as I could catch it, something in this fashion:

Celui qui sut toucher mon cœur, Jurait d'aimer toute la vie, Mais, hélas! c'était un trompeur, Celui qui sut toucher mon cœur.

S'il abjurait cruelle erreur, S'il revenait à son amie, Ah! toujours il serait vainqueur, S'il abjurait cruelle erreur.

And when the romance was done, which might have touched Adam's heart, if he could but have understood it, poor Laurette sighed amain, took up the checked shirt, and seemed likely to cry; Neptune looked doleful, as one who comprehended that something was the matter, but could not rightly understand what; and Ned was in the dumps. A dreary change had come over the whole family, of which the cause was not known to me for some time afterwards:—Adam was jealous.

The cause of this jealousy was no other than the quondam candidate for the fisherman's favour, his prime aversion, Nanny Sims.

This Nanny Sims was, as I have said, a washerwoman, and Adam's next neighbour, she tenanting a cottage and orchard on the same side of the river, but concealed from observation by the romantic and precipitous bank which formed so picturesque a background to

Laurette's pretty dwelling. In person, Nanny was as strong a contrast to the light and graceful Frenchwoman as could well be imagined; she being short and stout, and blowsy and frowsy, realizing exactly, as to form, Lord Byron's expression, "a dumpy woman," and accompanying it with all the dowdiness and slovenliness proper to her station. Never was even washerwoman more untidy. A cap all rags, from which the hair came straggling in elf-locks over a face which generally looked red-hot, surmounted by an old bonnet, originally black, now rusty, and so twisted into crooks and bends that its pristine shape was unguessable; a coloured cotton handkerchief pinned over a shortsleeved, open, stuff gown, and three or four aprons, each wet through, tied one above another, black stockings, men's shoes, and pattens higher and noisier than ever pattens were, completed her apparel.

Her habits were such as suited her attire and her condition. An industrious woman, it must be confessed, was Nanny Sims. Give her green tea, and strong beer, and gin at discretion, and she would wash the four-and-twenty hours round, only abstracting an hour apiece for her two breakfasts, ditto ditto for her two luncheons, two hours for her dinner, one for her afternoon's tea, and another for supper. And then she would begin again, and dry, and starch, and mangle, and iron, without let or pause, save those demanded by the above-

mentioned refections. Give her gin enough, and she never seemed to require the gentle refreshment called sleep. Sancho's fine ejaculation, "Blessed is the man that invented sleep!" with which most mortals have so entire a sympathy, would have been thrown away upon Nanny Sims. The discoverer of the still would have been the fitter object of her benediction. Gin, sheer gin, was to her what ale was to Boniface; and she throve upon it. Never was woman so invulnerable to disease. Hot water was her element, and she would go seething and steaming from the wash-tub, reeking and dripping from top to toe, into the keenest north-east wind, without taking more harm than the wet sheets and tablecloths which went through her hands. They dried, and so did she; and to all feeling of inconvenience that parboiled and soddened flesh seemed as inaccessible as the linen.

A hardworking woman was Nanny—but the part of her that worked hardest was her tongue. Benedick's speech to Beatrice, "I would my horse had the speed of your tongue, and so good a continuer," gives but a faint notion of the activity of that member in the mouth of our laundress. If ever mechanical contrivance had approached half so nearly to the perpetual motion, the inventor would have considered the problem as solved, and would have proclaimed the discovery accordingly. It was one incessant wag. Of course, the tongue was

a washerwoman's tongue, and the chatter such as might suit the accompaniments of the wash-tub and the ginbottle, not forgetting that important accessory to scandal in higher walks of life, the tea-table. The pendulum vibrated through every degree and point of gossiping, from the most innocent matter-of-fact, to the most malicious slander, and was the more mischievous, as being employed to assist the laundry-maid in several families, as well as taking in washing at home, her powers of collecting and diffusing false reports were by no means inconsiderable. She was the general tale-bearer of the parish, and scattered dissension as the wind scatters the thistle-down, sowing the evil seed in all directions. What added to the danger of her lies was, that they were generally interwoven with some slender and trivial thread of truth, which gave something like the colour of fact to her narrative, and that her legends were generally delivered in a careless undesigning style, as if she spoke from the pure love of talking, and did not care whether you believed her or not, which had a strong, but unconscious effect on the credulity of her auditors. Perhaps, to a certain extent, she might be innocent of ill-intention, and might not, on common occasions, mean to do harm by her evil-speaking; but, in the case of Laurette, I can hardly acquit her of malice. She hated her for all manner of causes: as her next neighbour; as a Frenchwoman; as pretty; as young; as fine; as the

favourite of Mrs. Talbot; and last, and worst, as the wife of Adam Stokes; and she omitted no opportunity of giving vent to her spite.

First, she said that she was idle; then, that she was proud; then, that she was sluttish; then, that she was extravagant; then, that she was vain; then, that she rouged; then, that she wore a wig; then, that she was by no means so young as she wished to be thought; and then, that she was ugly. These shafts fell wide of the mark. People had only to look at the pretty, smiling Laurette, and at her neat cottage, and they were disproved at a glance. At last, Nanny, over the wash-tub at the Park, gave out that Laurette was coquettish; and that she would have Master Adam look about him: that honest English husbands who married French wives, and young wives, and pretty wives into the bargain, had need to look about them; that she, for her part was very sorry for her worthy neighbour-but, that folks who lived near, saw more than other folks thought for, and then Nanny sighed and held her tongue. holding her tongue produced a wonderful sensation in the Park laundry; such an event had never occurred there before; it was thought that the cause of her speechlessness must be something most portentous and strange, and questions were rained upon her from all quarters.

For an incredible space of time (at least two minutes) Nanny maintained a resolute silence, shook her head, and said nothing. At last, in pure confidence, she disclosed to five women, the laundry-maid, the dairy-maid, two housemaids, and another char-woman, the important fact; that it was not for nothing that Gilbert carried a basket every day from Mrs. Talbot to Laurette; that her husband, poor man, had not found it out yet, but that, doubtless, his eyes would be opened some day or other; that she did not blame Gilbert so much, poor fellow, the chief advances being made by the foreign madam, who had said to her, in her jargon, that she should be dead if the basket did not come every day, meaning, no doubt, if he did not bring the basket; and that all the world would see what would come of it. Then, recommending secrecy, which all parties promised, Nanny put on her shawl, and her pattens, and trudged home; and before night the whole house knew of it, and before the next day the whole parish—the only exceptions being, perhaps, Laurette herself, and Colonel and Mrs. Talbot, who were, as great people generally are, happily ignorant of the nonsense talked in their own kitchen.

Two persons, at all events, heard the story, with as many circumstantial additions as the tale of the three black crows—and those two were Adam Stokes, whom it made as jealous as Othello upon somewhat the same course of reasoning, and Gilbert himself, who, something of a rural coxcomb, although no practised seducer, began at last to believe that what every body said must

be partly true, that though he himself were perfectly guiltless of love, the fair lady might have had the misfortune to be smitten with his personal good gifts (for Gilbert was a well-looking, ruddy swain, of some nineteen or twenty, the very age when young lads confide in the power of their own attractions) and to make up his mind to fall in love with her out of gratitude.

Accordingly he began to court Laurette at every opportunity, and Laurette, who, in spite of her French education had no notion that an Englishman's wife could be courted by any body but her husband, and whose comprehension of the language was still too vague to enable her to understand him thoroughly, continued to treat him with her usual friendly kindness, the less inclined to make any observation on his conduct, since she was altogether engrossed by the moodiness of her husband, who had suddenly changed from the most loving to the most surly of mortals. Laurette tried to sooth and pacify him, but the more she strove against his ill humour the worse it grew, and the poor young Frenchwoman at last took to singing melancholy songs, and sighing, and drooping, and hanging her head like a bereaved turtledove. It was in this state that I saw her.

Matters were now advancing towards a crisis. Gilbert saw Laurette's dejection, and imputing it to a hopeless passion for himself, ventured to send her a billetdoux, written by Colonel Talbot's valet, (for although he had learnt to write at a national school, he had already contrived to forget his unpractised lesson) which, in terms fine enough for a valet himself, requested her to honour him with a private interview at the stile, by the towing-path, at nine in the evening, when Adam would be away.

This English, which was too fine to be good—that is to say, to be idiomatic, proved more intelligible to Laurette than his previous declarations, although aided by all the eloquence of eyes. She, however, resolved to take further advice on the occasion, and showed the epistle to Ned.

- "What is this writing here?" said Laurette, "What will it say?"
  - "It's a love-letter, Mrs. Stokes;" answered Ned.
- "What does it want?" questioned Mrs. Stokes; "me to give a rendezvous at de stile?"
  - "Yes," rejoined Ned; "you to go to the stile.
- "De people is mad!" exclaimed poor Laurette.

  Dere's your masterre"—
  - " Master's jealous!" cried Ned.
  - " And dis wicked man!"
  - " He's in love!"
- "De people is fools!" exclaimed poor Laurette; "De people is mad! But I'll go to de stile—and Nède, you and Nèpe shall go too."—And so it was settled.

Nine o'clock came, and the party set off. And about five minutes past nine Nanny Sims met Adam near the towing-path.

"Do you want your wife, master Stokes?" quoth the crone; "are you looking for Gilbert? I saw them both but now, one a little way on this side of the stile, the other a little beyond. They'll have met by this time." And without pausing for an answer on she went.

Adam pursued his walk with furious strides, and paused as he came within sight of the place, considering in which way he had best announce his presence. The supposed lovers had not yet met, but in an instant Gilbert jumped over the style and caught hold of Laurette, and in another instant the active Frenchwoman escaped from his arms, gave him a box on the ear that almost upset him, called to "Nède" and "Nèpe," both which trusty adherents, lay in ambush by the way side, and poured forth such a flood of scolding in French and broken English, mingled with occasional cuffs, the dog barking and Ned laughing the whilst, that the discomfited gallant fairly took to his heels, and fled. way, however, he encountered Adam, who, without wasting a word upon the matter, took him up in one hand and flung him into the Kennet.

"A ducking 'll do him no harm," quoth Adam; "he can swim like a fish—and if I catch Nanny Sims, I'll give her a taste of cold water too," added the fisher-

### 286 THE FISHERMAN IN HIS MARRIED STATE.

man, hugging his pretty wife, who was now sobbing on his bosom, "and I deserve to be ducked myself for mistrusting of thee like a land-lubber, but if ever I sarve thee so again," continued he, straining her to his honest bosom, "if ever I sarve thee so again, may I have a round dozen the next minute, and be spliced to Nanny Sims into the bargain."

### CHRISTMAS AMUSEMENTS.

(No. V.)

THE young people of Haddonleigh still continued a good deal in awe of Mr. Mortimer, whose gentle reserve, never thrown aside except for a few minutes, (as in the case of the charades) joined to his high reputation for talent and learning, was, to be sure, not a little for-With Mr. Wilkins and myself he chatted midable. easily and delightfully, but the moment any young lady (except Annie) entered the room, he became instantly shy and silent; his smile, so remarkable for its bright intelligence, vanished as by magic; and the eye, which when animated, lighted up his countenance as the sun does a landscape, changing a really plain man into a handsome one, was immediately cast down. these symptoms, and others too long to relate, it struck me that poor Mr. Mortimer was one of those unfortunate

rich bachelors who have been persecuted by husbandhunting-misses, and manœuvring mamma's into a sort of young-lady-phobia, -an absolute horror of every unmarried woman between the ages of seventeen and seven-and-thirty. The disengaged manners and evident artlessness of my young friends, as well as the singular single-mindedness of their parents, ought indeed to have prevented the slightest suspicion of any such design in the present instance. A man of far less general acuteness than Mr. Mortimer, might have seen that the kind, good-natured, indolent, simple, Mrs. Wilkins, was totally incapable, mentally and bodily, of forming a scheme of any sort. She was a sort of human machine, most comfortably guided by the energy and volition of others; her husband in great matters, and in smaller ones her maid, officiating as engineer. It always seemed to me that her journey through life was accomplished pretty much after the fashion of her travels on the continent; reclining in one corner of an easy carriage, and drawn from place to place exactly as those about her chose to direct. Such is not the order of woman who goes husband-hunting. Mr. Wilkins, on the contrary, was sufficiently active and alert; but all his energy was concentrated in the one great pursuit of forming a rare and splendid collection of old books. To obtain an unique brochure of Nash or Greene, or a pamphlet wanting to complete his almost entire collection of Defoe's innumerable works, or a perfect copy of De Bry 1, or any such inestimable treasure, he would, indeed, have laid as many schemes, and put as many engines in motion, as the most ingenious diplomatist on record; but to secure a rich husband for either of his daughters, was a pursuit that had no interest for him—the object was too modern by at least a century. He was a kind father, and liked his children well enough in their way, but his heart was in his library. Totally incapable was he of setting a trap for a rich bachelor.

Mr. Mortimer, a prize of ten thousand, had, however, been accustomed to such exceeding dexterity in the great art of angling for a husband, had found the hook so well covered and so variously baited, and had so often seen the skilful fisherman cast his net on the stream and leave it floating for hours in seeming carelessness as to the result, that he might be pardoned for suspecting some lurking line or concealed mesh even in

¹ An old collection of Latin Voyages illustrated by engravings, made in that stage of the art, when if it were wished to represent a tree, a house, and a cow, the house was perched on the top of the tree, and the cow on the top of the house. I once saw a copy of this work, in which the plates being discoloured and some of them mutilated, they were reinforced by duplicates taken from another copy cut up for the purpose. The volume, thus enriched, was considered one of the rarest and most valuable in existence, and was, I believe, sold by Mr. Evans for above 7001. I do not recollect the name of the fortunate purchaser.

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the clearest and purest waters; the more so as he was a thoroughly modest man, and laid all schemes, whether of parents or of daughters, entirely to the score of his splendid fortune and eminent station in society. I have never seen a man more thoroughly free from coxcombry and vanity; he regarded his large income as his sole attraction; and I am persuaded would gladly have been a far poorer man, to have been quit for ever of the real or imputed designs of the adroit female speculators, whose machinations had so long troubled his repose.

In the present case I was luckily able to dissipate his suspicions; and when I, with seeming carelessness, informed him of the matrimonial engagements of both the young ladies, Miss Wilkins to an attaché to one of our foreign embassies, a gentleman of good family, fair fortune, middling abilities, and great personal beauty, quite a pendant to his pretty mistress, and Sophy to a very rising barrister, adding, that both sisters were to be married in the spring; the relief to his mind would have been visible to the most careless observer. could not have communicated more agreeable intelligence. The restraint of his manner vanished instantaneously, and he became as friendly with her elder sisters as he had always been with Annie, whom from the first he had considered as an amiable child, and had treated pretty much as her father, of whom she was the avowed favourite, was used to treat her himself, employing her to fetch and carry books in the library, which was one of her haunts, and playing battledore and shuttlecock with her in the hall.

He was now equally at his ease with the other young ladies, and even began to display for their amusement, a talent for very slight and almost impromptu verses, which, though sufficiently frivolous in itself, added pleasantly enough to our Christmas amusements.

The first specimen of his vers de société came upon us all like a puzzle, for we never had heard of him as a rhymer, and were almost as much astonished at his performances in this department, as at his acting in the charades. The season had been so far mild, as to permit sheltered flowers to blossom even till Christmas, and one of the hardiest of all the tribes, a little simple heart's-ease, had niched itself into the south-west corner of a gothic window at the lodge, and continued to put forth its flowers as quietly and contentedly in the very midst of winter, as its first cousin the violet is wont to do amongst the rudest winds of March. Miss Wilkins, a professed florist, as was testified at the very time by her superb collection of chrysanthemums 1, which hung

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Few plants are more beautiful than the chrysanthemum, which, with the camellia, may fairly be said to make flowers last all the year round. I had several last winter, especially of the gold colour and the tassel white, of which the circumference

their rich garlands of blossoms, red, white, yellow, and purple of all varieties, forming a natural tapestry amidst the stone arches of the south gallery, the noblest of conservatories: Miss Wilkins, in spite of the splendour of her own winter flower garden, had condescended to admire the little heart's-ease, and the good woman at the lodge had put the root into a garden-pot, and sent it up to the house as a humble offering to the young lady, whose kindness and good humour never failed to attract affection amongst the servants and dependents of the family.

So far was sufficiently matter of course: but on the flower lay a sheet of folded paper addressed to Miss Wilkins, which occasioned some amusement and much perplexity. Verses they were! and who could have written them? For I, on being challenged, denied the charge, with a directness which could not be questioned. Be whose they might, of a surety they were none of mine. Good or bad here they are to speak for themselves.

### TO MISS WILKINS,

WITH A TUFT OF HEART'S-EASE.

A flower there is of various dye, And strangely various destiny:

varied from twelve to thirteen inches, and the plants were loaded with rich blossoms.

Now in the springing meadow born,
Now nestling 'mid the bearded corn,
Now proudly rear'd in garden wide,
Now doom'd in rustic nook to bide,
Through summer's heats and frosts of spring,
And stormy autumn blossoming;
Fronting with smiles life's wintry hour,
The lowliest and the hardiest flower.

And names with gentle meanings fraught Hath love of that fair blossom taught, As heart's-ease or as Pensée known, Or laid by Shakspeare at the throne Of his great queen—if right I guess, His wounded love in idleness <sup>1</sup>.

- 1 Every body knows the lines :-
  - "Yet mark'd I where the bolt of Cupid fell;
    It fell upon a little western flower,
    Before milk-white, now purple with love's wound,
    And maidens call it love in idleness."

Midsummer Night's Dream.

Mr. Mortimer's verses were written before the cultivation of the heart's-ease became a fashion, I had nearly said a passion, or he might have added some scores of titles to his list, for the varieties are almost as numerous as those of the geranium tribe, and, like the geranium, almost every variety has a separate designation. One little tuft of deepest blue
Beneath a cottage casement grew,
'Midst woodbine stems, a self-sown flower,
Planted by wind and nursed by shower.
This little tuft so deeply blue,
Of late you saw and praised its hue,
(Perchance 'twas your sweet care to please,
Perchance you loved the small heart's-ease,)
And now it goes, an honour'd flower,
To bloom beneath your statelier bower;
Oh! every blessing with it go,
That verse can ask or mortal know!

Much were the young ladies puzzled, and many were the guesses as to the writer, and we were just about to sally forth to the lodge, to make further inquiry, when Annie coming in, and being apprized of the affair, at once declared the hand-writing to be Mr. Mortimer's. "She had seen him write," she said, "over and over again in the library, and was quite sure that the Greek ee's in the manuscript were Mr. Mortimer's Greek ee's and nobody else's. She was positively certain—but she would run and ask—her father and he never minded her going to them when they were busy—indeed they often employed her to fetch their books. She would go directly." And off she ran; and as Mr. Mortimer was too much amazed by Annie's recognition of his hand-writing, (a circum-

stance that seemed to interest him much) to think of denying the authorship of the trifle in question, the young ladies' curiosity was appeased, and the gentleman's popularity established on the most satisfactory basis.

All the awe occasioned by his reserve and his reputation vanished before this one little act of condescending gallantry. Sophia produced her album, and begged "that he would honour her as he had done her sister by writing in it. There was only one blank page left; it had been an old friend, a very old friend; she had had it for more years than she could tell;" (a young lady under twenty loves to talk in that strain) "and if he would but close the volume for her, it would be an unspeakable obligation."

Mr. Mortimer bowed, smiled, deprecated, and promised according to rule; and began turning over the album 1, which was one of the first fashion, full of MS. music, and of every sort of drawing ever seen, with a

<sup>1</sup> The only very covetable book of this genus that I ever happened to see, belongs to a friend of mine in Edinburgh, the wife of an artist, and herself one of the finest flower painters that ever lived. It consists of a series of common plants drawn by herself, and illustrated by original verses by almost all the poets of that poetical northern region, and many of the south—for every body is proud to write in such a book, and for such a person. The flowers are, however, its main attraction. Their beauty is beyond all praise.

few literary reliques, such as a bay-leaf from the tomb of Virgil, a billet of Madame de Staël, and half a dozen autographs of our great modern poets curiously let in. The staple commodity was, however, as usual, small poetry by small people; and he began with a delicious voice and exquisite intonation, to read over such of the pieces as happened to be legible.

### SONG.

Give thee good-morrow, busy bee,

No cloud is in the sky,

The ringdove skims across the lea,

The matin lark soars high;

Gay sunbeams kiss the dewy flower,

Light breezes stir the tree,

And sweet is thine own woodbine bower,—

Good morrow, busy bee!

Give thee good even, busy bee!

The summer day is bye,

Now droning beetles haunt the lea,

And shricking plovers cry,

The light hath paled on leaf and flower,

The night-wind chills the tree,

And thou, well laden, leav'st thy bower,—

Good even, busy bee!

On a wreath of white flowers made of feathers, sent from a nunnery in the island of St. Michael.

Where summer's cloudless sunbeam smiles
Resplendent on the Falcon Isles 1.

Waking, with momentary ray,
Fresh diamonds from the Atlantic spray;
Where zephyrs winged with sweets like bees
Sport 'mid the clustering orange trees;
Where flowers like gems, and birds like flowers,
Glance through the vineyard's loaded bowers;
There sits the cloistered nun, and weaves
Her feathery wreath of buds and leaves.

Oh is it not a blissful task
Beneath those sunny groves to bask,
To gaze upon the unclouded sky,
To feel the fragrant breeze sweep by,
And from the loveliest things of air
The loveliest things of earth prepare?
It were meet task, so light and gay,
For Grecian Grace or Gothic Fay,
Venus to deck, or Oberon;
Such work had tricksy Ariel done
"Under the blossom" i' the sun.



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The name of Azores was given to these islands collectively, on account of the number of hawks and falcons found on them.

Why then, where plants and flow'rets glow
Like setting suns on Alpine snow;
Where the bright hues from earth that spring
Scarce match the paroquet's red wing;
Why from this land of rainbow bloom
Yon pallid rose's pensive gloom?
Yon jasmine's cold and paly star?
Yon myrtle dark and regular?
Why but her cheerless fate to tell,
The prisoned maid in convent cell,
Who wove the leafy crown so well?
Sole solace of her lonely hours,
To frame sad wreaths of stainless flowers!

## MARY, QUEEN OF SCOTS, FAREWELL TO FRANCE 1.

"Oh! pleasant land of France, farewell!

My country dear,

Where many a year

In peace and bliss I hoped to dwell!

Oh! pleasant land of France, farewell!"

<sup>1</sup> The first four lines are an imitation of the unhappy queen's own touching song; "Adieu, plaisant pays de France," to which I have already alluded in the introduction to this volume. The

So sang the Scottish queen, what time she stood On her proud galley's prow, and saw the shores Of France receding, the beloved shores That she should never see again. Big tears Dropt from her eyes, and from her lips the words Broke in fond repetition, "Pleasant land, Farewell! farewell!" Then silently she stood, The lovely one, silent and motionless Amidst her weeping train, her lofty head Thrown back, her fair cheek colourless, her eyes Fixed on the cloudy heaven. There was a passion Of grief in that fine form might have beseem'd Andromache, a captive, or the maid Of Thebes, Antigone, when doom'd to die. But this was a young queen,—the fairest queen The fairest lady of the earth, whose name Was as a spell for men to work by, Mary The peerless queen of Scots, returning home To reign. Yet there she stood, all motionless, Striving with fondest thoughts and deepest fears, Thoughts true and tender of her tender youth,

whole of the present short scene has been very finely set by Mr. C. S. Packer, of the Royal Academy of Music, whose talent as a composer will, I believe, be made known to the public in the course of the ensuing winter, in the great and arduous attempt of a real English opera on the model of the Italian, or, perhaps, more properly of the German school.

And fears that took a tone of prophecy.

There stood she silent, till again the lay

Burst from her lips: "Oh! pleasant land farewell!

Farewell to pageants glittering bright
The joust by day, the dance by night,
Proud realm of chivalry, farewell!
Farewell, in this sad hour more dear,
To loving friends and kinsmen near,

Oh! land of loyal hearts, farewell!

From thy fair hills and orange bowers
I go where dreary winter lours;

From courteous knights, quick, ardent, bold,
I go to bigots stern and cold;

From hope's gay dream for ever hurled
I go to breast the stormy world.
Oh! pleasant land of France, farewell!

Thy sunny shores no more I see,
Yet still my heart abides with thee;
Home of my happy infancy
A long a last farewell!"

"Ah!" cried Annie, interrupting the reader, "you should have heard that sung! Only, I believe, it is not published yet. But what comes next. 'Address spoken by Mr. Cathcart previously to the opening of the Oxford theatre with the tragedy of Hamlet.' Go on, Mr. Mortimer! pray!"

"No," said Sophia, "those lines should only be spoken by him for whom they were originally written. He's a friend of my brother's, a perfect gentleman, of course, and such an actor ! The verses are not good enough to afford to be heard through any other medium than his voice, fine as Mr. Mortimer's reading undoubtedly is."

"Really Sophy," rejoined Annie, "the two voices seem to me just alike-or if any thing, Mr. Mortimer's is the best. Isn't it, Tom? Isn't it, sister? Isn't it, mamma?" pursued the little damsel, shouting to Tom, who was sitting at the other fire-place studying the Sporting Magazine, to her eldest sister who was copying music at a table by his side, and to her mother who was quietly settled in a corner of the sofa nodding over her tatting-the lady-like employment which of all others comes nearest to doing nothing-not one of the referees having the smallest notion to what her question tended. "Pray, pray, go on! do go on!" pursued Annie without waiting for an answer. "Go on! go on!" And as Sophia, on a little recollection, joined in the request, Mr. Mortimer smiled, hesitated, and obeved.

<sup>1</sup> If I may be permitted another prophecy, it is that this gentleman will soon be heard of in London, as a tragedian of no common order.



"Romantic Oxford! 'mid thy verdant bowers,
Thy tapering spires, bright domes, and fretted towers,
Thy world of antique beauty, throned high
Sits the proud muse of Grecian tragedy,
From prostrate Athens long condemn'd to roam,
Thy sons her worshippers, thy halls her home!

Well may they worship! visions more sublime Ne'er rolled effulgent down the stream of time Than those which show the wrongs of Pelop's line, The woes of Thebes, the tale of Troy divine: Helen, the charmer of two thousand years, And sad Electra, eloquent in tears. Well may they worship! a mysterious glory Shines round those bards, immortal as their story; Unlettered woman feels, she knows not why, Even in a feebler tongue their potency; And the boy-poet in his day-dream sees Wreaths such as crown'd majestic Sophocles, Bold Æschylus, or sweet Euripides. Yet boast we one, immortal though they be, Whose single name outvies that mighty three: Shakspeare, our Shakspeare! Ill might we presume To strew fresh laurels o'er his honour'd tomb: Enough that we to-night attempt to show One thrilling form of nobleness and woe;

To body forth his sweet yet pregnant sadness,
His melancholy mirth, his wisest madness,
Whose every word, with truth intensest fraught,
Strikes on some secret chord of human thought,
Hamlet the Dane! Oh, but to follow well
The precepts that he gives, were to excel
In our great art! the very rules we tell
Might we but follow, little were our need
For your indulgence even now to plead!
Yet plead we must, though hopefully; for here
In this fair circle small our cause of fear;
Kind were ye ever, and our greeting blends
Warm thanks for past, with hope of future friends."

"Here is some prose at last," proceeded Mr. Mortimer, escaping with not ungratified confusion from Annie's rapturous thanks. "True and authentic copies of genuine letters between two ladies in Berkshire. Let us see what they are about."

## "MRS. P. TO MISS C. 1

"Mrs. P.'s compliments to Miss C. she was in hopes

<sup>1</sup> The following incredible letter was actually addressed by a woman of good fortune and respectable family, to her next neigh-



to have found her at home by this time, as she wishes to speak to her about a little bad workmanship in her house since she went away, by a board or something put upon it in what her maid calls her larder, which, by being ill done, the nails came almost through Mrs. P.'s passage, and there being no partition wall, only thin paper between the houses, which is very dangerous, and she hopes her maids are very careful, for we are both in danger, especially from her frequent large washes which were never so before, though there has been four different large families in that house since Mrs. P. has lived in the neighbourhood of W., and none of them had such great washes with all their great things only their small. which Miss C. has; it is not only dangerous, but very disfiguring to the place, and might be taken for a washerwoman's place rather than any body's else, and she almost wonders Miss C. can like it herself, only as she is seldom or ever at home, she does not find it so disagreeable, especially when the things hang out on both sides; and she must excuse her by mentioning her

bour in W. a few years ago. Miss C., a very clever and charming woman was, of course, enchanted to receive so original a communication, and tasked her own abilities, assisted by those of her friend the earl of M. to vie with so delightful a confusion of ideas, persons, and tenses in her answer. Alas, for the schoolmaster! We have no chance now-a-days of such amusing experiments in grammar. Our very serving maidens write good English.

donkey frightened her very much one day as the gate was opened, she went there to throw some rubbish and dropped her scissars, which she was some time in looking for; in the mean time she felt something touch her face which proved to be the creature: on looking up she saw the monster, she screamed, and her maids heard her.

I am, madam, your humble servant,

L. P.

# ANSWER BY MISS C. (ASSISTED BY LORD M.)

Miss C.'s compliments to Mrs. P., is sorry the partition wall should be only thin paper, and will put up some thicker as soon as she gets home. Miss C. is surprised washing great things should be so uncommon at W. I have always been used to clean sheets and table cloths; Miss C. is shocked to find Mrs. P. was alarmed at the sight of my ass, thought you had seen it often before; can't guess how it came to touch your face, 'tis very quiet in general, and was never called a monster before; but as Mrs. P. had lost her scissars, cannot wonder she was terrified; Miss C. will take care in future her maids hang all on one side.

I am, madam, your humble servant,

" To Mrs. P." M. C.

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x

After Annie's infectious laughter had a little subsided, and some deserved praise had been given to several sketches of Haddonleigh, from different points of view, by Sophia herself, Mr. Mortimer proceeded:

#### SONG 1.

And art thou come back safe again
From over the salt sea?
Hark! the bells ring a merry peal
As if to welcome thee!
And art thou, love, come home again
With a true heart and free?
Hark! how the merry bells ring on
As triumphing with me.

For first 'twas said that thou hadst fallen
In the fierce battle-strife;
And then that sudden pestilence
Had swept away thy life;

<sup>1</sup> I have a kindness for this little song quite unconnected with any merit of its own—if merit it have—since it formed one of the earliest links in my correspondence with the richly-gifted poetess—the admirable and delightful woman, Mrs. Hemans. She will remember the circumstance. Our correspondence has sometimes languished since, but the friendship that sprang from it I humbly hope can never alter.

One told that thou hadst wedded there
A lady of the land;
And one that thou wast speeding home
To win young Ellen's hand.

But thou art come back safe again
From over the salt sea;
Hark! the bells ring their merriest peal
To hail and welcome thee.
And thou art come back, mine own love,
With a true heart and free;
And the merry merry bells ring on
Their peal of joy for me.

"And then," said Sophy, "comes the blank leaf which you have promised to be so good as to fill up. Ah my poor pretty book! Many a scene, many a house have we been in together that we shall never see again; and many a friend has written in you whose hand lies stiff and cold in the grave! It is astonishing, Mr. Mortimer, how many persons have died that have written verses and made drawings for this album," pursued Sophia, turning over the leaves of the volume, the pictorial parts of which were really varied and beautiful: "I hope you are not afraid of sharing their destiny," continued she in a livelier tone; "for I am going to put a double task upon your gallantry, I see that the

first leaf is unfilled as well as the last, and you must begin as well as finish the work."

"Must I," replied Mr. Mortimer; "do vou really expect me to write both prologue and epilogue? Well, I shall do my best;" and he carried off the volume and returned it in about half-an-hour, with the head and tail pieces required by the fair lady, which Annie read aloud, and declared that she would have an album the very next day; "shan't I, dear papa?" cried she, clasping him round the neck and kissing him. "Won't you give me an album? And Sophy will draw in it, and Mr. Mortimer will write the first page. Won't you, Mr. Mortimer? Shan't I have an album, papa?" And both promised compliance, and Annie began reading the verses again, and trying not very successfully, I suspect, to make the rest of the company like them as well as she did. Les voici.

### THE FIRST PAGE.

As a portress at the gate
Of some park of antique state
Standeth in her woodland nook,
So guard I this stately book,
Dropping curtsies as I stand
To all who enter, key in hand.
Onward stranger! it receives
Thee amidst its clustering leaves;

Onward passenger! and view The lovely landscape through and through: Breezy lawn and sheltered bower, Princely hall and mouldering tower, Butterflies upon the wing, Summer flowerets blossoming, Birds just springing into song, Boys and girls, a joyous throng-Manhood's shape, and beauty's face, And all the countless forms of grace. Here be fancies bright and gay, Light jest and merry rondelay; Here be saws with wisdom fraught; Here the nobler world of thought; Life and life's epitome In this small compass thou may'st see. Then onward, gentle friend, and view The pleasant landscape through and through.

### THE LAST.

The book is filled, thy comrade long,
The pretty book of sketch and song,
Of words with gentle kindness fraught,
Of wisdom pure and lofty thought;
Book of sweet sadness! book that told
Of friends beloved beneath the mould,

And wakened oft the tender sigh, For vacant homes and years gone by. Yet sighs that breathe o'er well-spent hours Are sweet as western winds on flowers: Yet tears o'er virtuous memories shed Embalm and sanctify the dead. And oh may many a brightening ray Illume and gild thine onward day! And many a friend (for few can claim More proud to share that honoured name) Combine thy future life to bless With peace and love and happiness! For thee may every good conspire That verse can ask or heart desire. And the full album's latest line Call blessings down on thee and thine!

### A MOONLIGHT ADVENTURE.

I AM no lover of moonlight, unpoetical and ignominious as the avowal is; such is the fact, and I confess it frankly. I hate darkness and shadow, and a pallid fitful light, as much as I like distinctness, and brightness, and colour, and, therefore, love the sun. Give me the day's beauty, and who will may take the night's. I leave the ladv moon to those Endymions the poets. Nay, so far do I carry my distaste to that fair luminary, that half-light, for half-light I greatly prefer, sitting indoors over the red glowing embers of a wood fire (the place of all others for a comfortable chat), to shivering in marble colonnades, or trelliced arbours, under the fullest moon that There is something in that cold, pale, ever shone. trembling ray that is sure to check conversation. Even those persons who are so far from joining in my opinion, that they would swear by their honour that compared to the moonbeams the blessed sunshine is naught, are yet unconsciously chilled by their influence, and after exclaiming how beautiful! have little else to say. The nightingale, to be sure, I must admit the nightingale,—but then in spite of Shakspeare's mistake¹ on the subject, his matchless song is heard in the general pause of noon (when so many of the common birds are hushed) even more finely than in the silence of midnight,—and never, I think, comes on the ear so sweetly as when mingled in some leafy solitude, with the tender cooing of the wood-pigeon.

I am no lover of moonlight. Most of my adventures in that way have been of a disastrous sort, whether by land or by water. One fine summer evening, for instance, returning in the captain's boat, gallantly manned by the officers of the ship from a frigate where we had dined, to the Isle of Wight where we were residing, the boat was unluckily stranded off St. Helen's, and we were obliged to wait five dismal hours until the tide was so good as to come and take us off, the captain's lady, a peevish, shrewish personage, taking occasion to fret, and fume, and scold the whole time, ringing the changes on all the evils that were likely to befal us, from catching cold to being drowned, until she worked herself up



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> One almost admits a mistake of Shakspeare's as authority from respect, not only to the great name of the greatest of poets, but to his extraordinary accuracy of observation.

into a fit of hysterical crying, and was effectually quieted by the first lieutenant's throwing a hat full of sea-water in her face. I never shall forget those five hours. Then again during the very next summer, being at Southampton, and making an excursion as far as Ryde in a friend's yacht, we had the calamity on our passage back to be becalmed for nearly the same period, just opposite Netley Abbey, and to have on board two musical young ladies, who obligingly offered to beguile the time by the exercise of their accomplishment, and aggravated our misfortune by every variety of scream and squall, of which that formidable personage, a singing young lady, is capable. I remember at the time comparing the inflictions, and thinking that the scolding, crying, and sobbing of the stranded boat (to say nothing of the satisfactory conclusion of the sousing) were greatly preferable to the bravuras and duetts of the yacht. Besides which nobody flung literal cold water on the fair singers, though, metaphorically speaking, it was pretty freely administered.

It must be admitted, that the winds and the waves were the chief aggressors in these grievances; but there shone the moon bright and cold, laughing, as it seemed, at our distress, and aggravating our sufferings. If it had been dark we might have gone to sleep. But in many a disastrous chance she herself, with her treacherous fickle light, has been the prime agent. Were we

not run away with down the steepest hill in the county, because the dear cream-colour caught a glimpse of the moon shimmering and shivering in the deep pool by Brackham Common? And did not the same lamented steed carry us into the middle of a herd of deer in Talbot Park, because he took fright at the black shadow of an old oak that lay across the road like something real and tangible? And were we not fairly upset into a gravel pit on Hartley Heath, one snowy Twelfth Night, owing again to those bright deceitful beams which made the false track seem like the true? Have we not missed our road through thee, false moon, oftener than tongue can tell? Were we not near driving into the Long Water at Eversley, because we took a pollard for a finger-post, and a holly bush for a milestone? Dost thou not make lane look like lane, and cottage like cottage, and wood like wood? And art thou not the only true ignis fatuus? Never am I taken in by the treacherous postscript to a country concert bill. "N.B. There will be a moon." Give me an honest darkness. Then one feels one's way, and finds it.

As, however, there is no rule without it's exception, so I must admit that certain pleasant passages of my life have been connected with her Cynthian majesty, one of which is the subject of the present short story.

Several years ago I was on a visit to a distant relation of my mother's, a naval officer, at his beautiful seat in the New Forest. The good admiral, for such was his professional rank, a most hearty and jovial person, had no greater delight than that of assembling "troops of friends" at his hospitable mansion, and his house was, as usual, full of agreeable and well-chosen guests. By far the most striking of his inmates was his orphan ward, Jane Gordon, a rich heiress of high birth, and splendid connexions, who, although she had been for some months of age, and in full possession of her large estates in the north of England, still continued to reside with her kind guardian, to whom she looked up with the tender love of a grateful child towards an indulgent parent.

The dear old admiral was, as it seemed to me, the only man whom Jane Gordon was ever likely to regard with either love or reverence. Of a noble and commanding beauty, and a most stately and dignified deportment, she had, it was true, a general and queenlike courtesy and condescension towards all who approached her, but so mingled with a gentle reserve, and a high-bred coldness of manner, that her very polish served to repel familiarity, and to keep the boldest suitors at a distance. Amongst her female friends, however, (and I was fortunate enough to be included in the number) she sometimes relaxed sufficiently to show that her mind was as high-toned and majestic as her person. I have seldom met with any one who had a wider reach of

thought, a purer taste, a warmer heart, or a kinder temper. Her common demeanour was abundantly chilling, but her moments of confidence were enchanting. She resembled those northern springs where the moment that the snow melts away, leaves and flowers start up to succeed them.

Of these glimpses of sunshine, however, no gentleman, certainly no young gentleman, was ever permitted to share. Proposal after proposal had been rejected, and her good guardian, who, much as he valued her society, ardently wished to see her married, declared to me one day that he had made up his mind never again to advocate the cause of any of her lovers. "I verily believe," added he, "that the more the girl is courted, the more she sets herself against matrimony. It's the only thing in which she's perverse. But the moment I mention a young fellow to her as likely to make a good husband, from that instant she takes an aversion to him; so that for the future I shall let her have her own way. There's your favourite now, Charles Elliott, who has been staying here these two months; its quite clear that he's dying for her, and what a fine noble fellow he is! How full of knowledge, and talent, and goodness! What a son, and brother, and friend, he has been all his life! And what a happy woman his wife would be! Yet she takes no more notice of Charles Elliott than of my old crutch! He asked me yesterday to second his proposals; but I told him frankly that he had my best wishes, but that I was tired of recommending suitors, and should take a special care not to mention his name. I' faith, last time I spoke to her on the subject, (it was about Sir Thomas Hanley, some three months ago,) she implored me to spare her such discourses, and look upon her as devoted to a single life. Elliott would have as fair a chance of tempting a nun from her cloister as of winning Jane Gordon." And with an air of affectionate vexation, the worthy veteran walked away.

It was on the evening succeeding this conversation, that Jane Gordon, who had excused herself, on the score of indisposition, from accompanying the admiral and most of his visitors to dine at the house of a neighbouring nobleman, having besought me to remain and keep her company, beguiled me into taking a moonlight walk into the forest. We were the only persons left at home, for Mr. Elliott had at breakfast time announced his intention of riding out for the day to visit a harumscarum friend of his, who was also staying in the neighbourhood; so that Miss Gordon, who had not made her excuses until half-an-hour before the admiral and his party set off for their dinner engagement, felt herself perfectly secure from intrusion and interruption in her ramble. She had been all day silent and languid, far less stately than usual, and somewhat less calm, but

infinitely more charming, softer, sweeter, tenderer, more feminine, than I had ever seen her even in her happiest moments. She seemed to me less ill than agitated, and I could not help saying "Has any thing vexed you, Jane? Can I be of any use to you?" And she hesitated and sighed out "No,"—whilst her countenance and manner said most plainly yes.

She was not, however, a person to be questioned, even if I had been disposed to force a reluctant confidence; and taking for granted that the worthy old admiral (a professed match-maker) had, in spite of his professions, been worrying her on the score of Charles Elliott, or some other of her lovers, and that her embarrassment and low spirits proceeded from that cause, I followed the bent of her humour, and walked with her silently through the grounds into the forest.

The day had been oppressively warm, one of the rare hot days of an English summer, and was succeeded by a fresh and fragrant dewiness, which fell like balm upon the spirits. We wandered on, through brake and brier, threading the intricacies of the beautiful woodland paths, which lay in delicious repose in the bright moonlight, until at last she left the open tracks, and edged herself by ways to which she, as an inhabitant, was familiar, through the thick entanglement of underwood, until we reached a very small opening, quite walled in by hawthorn and holly bushes, and shaded by a noble beech,

the roots of which formed, she said, her favourite seat. There we sate down, and were falling gradually into a subdued tone of conversation, well suited to the scene and the hour, when all on a sudden we heard the rapid steps and louder talking of men on the other side of the thicket, and immediately recognised the deep mellow tones of Mr. Elliott, and the gay blithe voice of his light-hearted companion, Captain Morland. about to propose to join them, or, at least, to call to them to join us in our snug, and whilst we chose to make it so, undiscoverable retreat, when the strong and agitated compression of Miss Gordon's hand on my arm, whilst she laid the fore-finger of her other hand on her lip, restrained me, and kept me an undesigned and unwilling listener to the following conversation, during which she contrived, by the most supplicating gestures, and by the most imploring pressure of my hand, to keep me as entirely and almost breathlessly silent as her-I shall put down the dialogue just as we heard it through the impervious leafy wall, that alone parted

<sup>1</sup> As this is the third time during this little volume that I have appeared in the very equivocal character of an over-hearer, I think it only due to my personal reputation to assure the courte-ous reader, that on all these occasions the occurrence was purely accidental, and that I am as far from being an habitual listener as any she in the world.



us from the speakers, of whom Captain Morland was for some minutes incomparably the most loquacious.

Mor. What a night, and what scenery! Was ever vapour so soft, so transparent, and so silvery, as those small clouds that flit about the moon? And the edges of light which surround the larger and darker masses, how bright and how beautiful are they! Did you ever see a lovelier sky?

Ell. Very lovely.

Mor. Then the effect of the moon-beams on this forest glade! How they sleep on that broad oak, and dance in the tiny rivulet, that wells from amidst the convolved and snaky roots, and goes winding and gurgling along the turf like a thing of life! And how the shining bark of the weeping birch stands out like a stem of silver, whilst the delicate branches as they flutter in the night breeze, cast a tremulous and glancing shadow on the ground beneath! Is it not beautiful?

Ell. Eh?—Yes; I believe so.

Mor. You believe so!—And see how the holly leaves glitter above the tall fern, which waves round us in such wild profusion—a lower forest! Is it not enchanting? And that deep shadowy perspective, the intricacy, the involution, the mystery, which makes so much of the charm and the character of forest scenery. You don't enjoy it, Elliott! You, whom I have heard de-

claim for an hour together on a pollard by the side of a pond, or an elm tree overhanging a rustic bridge, or any such common-place picturesqueness; and here's a piece of fairy land that sets even such a rattlepate as I am exclaiming, and when one asks you if it be beautiful, you say, I believe so! Only look at that cluster of glowworms—Elliott, what can you be thinking of? I know that you are in love. But your true lover is ever a lover of nature; basks in the moonshine, and revels in the forest. It is his proper atmosphere. What can you be thinking of?

Ell. Simply, my dear Morland, that however delightful this place may be, it would be still more delightful if one of the fairies you talk of would have the goodness to guide us home again. For, in my humble opinion, we are lost.

Mor. Never fear.

"I know each glade, and every alley green, Dingle and bosky dell——"

By Jove, Elliott, you are right! I thought we had come back to the great oak, from which the avenue branches, which leads us straight to Kinley Lodge. It's just such a tree. But there is no spring welling out from the roots of the Kinley oak.

Ell. Neither is there any sign of an avenue here. Nor, indeed, as far as I can see, of any path whatsoever.

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We edged ourselves, if you remember, through one of these thickets. I think that to the left.

Mor. No: this to the right. I think to the right. Never mind. We are lost. Take the matter quietly, man, instead of wandering about in that disconsolate manner, frightening the birds from their nests, by beating the bushes, and treading upon the poor pretty glowworms and putting out their lamps. Be peaceable. I shall have the worst of the adventure, inasmuch as I shall certainly get disinherited by my good aunt Mrs. Elizabeth Morland, for keeping bad hours whilst an inmate of her mansion, or rather for staying out all night (for we shall hardly get back before morning) in, as she will truly assert, bad company; for worse company than you at present, I think, can hardly be found. If the fair Jane Gordon were to see you in this mood!

Ell. Are you sure, Morland, that you have lost your way?

Mor. Certain. But what need you mind? You have no maiden aunt to look after your false steps—you are a mere guest of the good admiral's—nobody to take care of you, nobody to lecture you, nobody to rave if you sleep out twenty nights; whilst I—

Ell. And you really think that we shan't get home before morning?

Mor. Morning! I rather apprehend that we shall

never get home at all. I don't imagine that we shall find our way out; and I doubt, even if any one thinks it worth while to look after us, whether he will find his way in, though, I take it, the forest is the last wilderness in which we shall be sought for. Mrs. Elizabeth is far more likely to have us cried in the next town, or to advertise us in the London papers, under the head "missing," with our names and marks, like two stray pointers.

Ell. Do, pray, be serious.

Mor. Certainly. It is a most grave subject. Twenty years hence, perhaps, we may turn up in the shape of the remains of two unfortunate gentlemen, who——

Ell. Hark! Is that a clock?

Mor. It's an owl, the clock of the forest.

Ell. Morland, I beseech you, leave jesting. If you could but imagine how important it is to me to reach Kinley by a certain time! Can you guess at the hour?

Mor. My repeater will tell us. (Strikes his watch.)
—Half-past ten.

Ell. Gracious heaven! my prospects are ruined for ever! I am a wretch for life! the most miserable of wretches! he who might have been the happiest.

Mor. That tone is too genuine and too passionate to be trifled with. But how, my dear Elliott, can this little difficulty, which must end with the night, affect your happiness? Ell. You know Jane Gordon?

Mor. Yes! yes! and your passion for her. All the world knows that, the proud beauty herself included. But she is so nice, and so coy, and so high, and so cold. What of Jane Gordon?

Ell. We are staying, you know, in the same house; and this morning I ventured, for the first time, to put my love for her into words.

Mor. Ay! And she listened?

Ell. Yes; she, the coy, the haughty Jane Gordon, listened and blushed, and stood a while in abashed silence, then turned slowly away; and when I seized her hand and pressed for an answer, faltered that she was going out with her guardian, but should be back by eleven; and then she broke from me. And not to meet her! she, the dear, the charming, the beautiful Jane Gordon! the admired of all eyes! the coveted of all tongues! the beloved of all hearts! she to have made such a concession! and if you had but heard the tone! If you had but seen the blush! If you could image to yourself how divinely her unusual softness became the coy beauty! And to fail her now!

Mor. You shall not fail her. I nill find the way. How in the name of Heaven came you to be wandering in the forest on such a night?

Ell. Why, I went to spend the day with you to beguile the hours. And you yourself proposed that we

should walk back to Kinley, and promised to be my guide.

Mor. But to trust such a guide as I was likely to prove! And on such an occasion! Never mind, though, my good fellow! I will find the way. And, depend on it, since Jane Gordon likes you well enough to have made this half appointment, that you'll be the happy man whether you keep it or not. But I'll find the way. I'll be sure to find the way. We must set about it now in good earnest. To the right! I am sure to the right.

At this point the voices ceased, and the hasty footsteps which had at first mingled with the sound of crashing branches as Captain Morland, followed by his friend, forced his way through a thicket, luckily in an opposite direction from that in which we lay concealed, gradually receded, and at last totally ceased. We still remained in motionless silence. Jane, whose situation reminded me a little of that of Beatrice in the arbour, trembling and breathless, delighted yet ashamed; and I revolving with some amusement the fixed resolves of one-andtwenty, and the good admiral's knowledge of women. At last, when quite sure that the gentlemen were fairly out of hearing, and could not by possibility repay us in our own coin by listening to our discourse, she could restrain her emotion no longer, but fell on my neck in a passion of tears, sobbing out, "my friend! my own dear friend!"

- " Well, dearest?"
- "What can you think of me?"
- "I think you a wise woman. You could not have made a better choice."
  - "But my guardian?"
- "He'll be enchanted. He told me only this very morning that he believed you'd live and die in single blessedness. A protestant nun I think he called you."
  - "Oh! what will he think of me?"
- "He'll be delighted, I tell you. Sailors are not, to be sure, remarkable for their knowledge of female character; but do you think he never heard before of a woman's changing her mind?"
  - " And Charles Elliott himself?"
- "Nay, you heard what he said on the subject; and if you have a mind to hear what he has to say farther, I advise you to make haste home, for they'll certainly be back before us. Come, dearest!"
  - "Oh! I never can see him this evening."
- "But at all events we must get home. Did ever mortal creep so slowly? Walk faster, love!"
- "You'll keep my counsel, then? You promise to keep my counsel?"
- "Aye, dearest, as long as it shall be necessary." And she pressed my hand, and we walked home in silence. And I have more than kept my word. For though the parties have been married these half dozen years, I defy

Mrs. Charles Elliott to say that I ever breathed a syllable of our moonlight adventure to man or woman till now, that I whisper it as a profound secret to that most safe and discreet confidant, my singular good friend the public.

## SEA-SIDE RECOLLECTIONS.

LIKE most of the inhabitants of this little island, I have been occasionally in the habit of spending some of the summer months and the early part of the autumn by the sea. But excepting for one twelvemonth of my life I was never a resident on the coast, and that residence occurred when I was between the ages of eight and ten; rather short of the one period, and somewhat turned of the other. That was my only opportunity of

I Upon it I have not often trusted myself, being somewhat of Bishop Hall's mind, who uses the following racy expressions with regard to a voyage which he had occasion to take: "The sea brooked not me, nor I it; an unquiet element, made only for wonder and use, not for pleasure. Alighted once from that wooden conveyance and uneven way, I bethought myself how fondly life is committed to an unsteady and reeling piece of wood, to fickle winds, and restless waters, whilst we may set foot on stedfast and constant earth." What would the good bishop have said to steamboats, and the added dangers of explosion and fire?

making acquaintance with the mighty ocean in its winter sublimity of tempest and of storm; and partly, perhaps, from the striking and awful nature of the impression, partly from some peculiarity of character and of situation, as a lonely, musing, visionary child, the recollection remains indelibly fixed in my memory, fresh and vivid, as if of yesterday. It was a bold and dangerous coast, and the wintry tempest was as perilous as it seemed. Often and often have I, refusing to go to bed, watched at an upper window with the maid whose business it was to attend me, on a December night, striving to catch a glimpse, through the almost palpable darkness, of some vessel struggling with the gale, whose position was shown momentarily by the brief glare of the minute gun, calling for unavailing aid, or the brighter flash of the lightning which illumined sea and sky in lurid flame, only to leave them in a more frightful obscurity. have gazed through many a midnight with intense and breathless interest on scenes like these; and then in the morning I have seen the cold bright wintry sun shining gaily on the dancing sea, still stirred by the last breath of the tempest, and on the floating spars and parted timbers of the wreck. Once, too, and only once, I saw a human body thrown on shore amid the rocks. watched the dark and strange looking object (it was the corpse of a sailor) as it lay tossing on the waves, without in the slightest degree suspecting that it was a dead body, until a fearful and unearthly shriek from a group of women assembled on the beach, informed me that the helpless and almost shapeless object which the waves had just flung ashore, was no other than the swoln and blackened remains of a fellow-creature. I shall never forget that shriek. The wreck had been a trading vessel belonging to the port, and the women assembled were the wives, mothers, sisters, and children of the crew; one of whom had recognised her father in the disfigured corpse. I never can forget that cry.

The place of our residence was an old sea-port on the southern coast of England, about a hundred and fifty miles from London, and situated on the point of union between two counties, the principal part of the town being, I believe, in Dorset; but the character of the scenery, the boldness of the coast, and the rich woodiness of the inland views, varied by hill and dale, and sparkling streamlet, belonged entirely to Devonshire, beautiful Devon-The town itself was of great antiquity, and considerable historical interest, not much frequented as a watering-place, although occasionally resorted to by some of the wealthy inhabitants of Bristol, who preferred it to the gayer and showier, but less convenient marine villages which had sprung into fashion on the Devonshire coast, and still distinguished by its fine harbour, its magnificent pier, the large coasting trade consequent on these advantages, and the degree of political importance, almost inevitably attached to a borough which possesses the troublesome privilege of returning two members to serve in parliament.

Our habitation, although situated not merely in the town but in the principal street, had nothing in common with the small and undistinguished houses on either side and in front, although they again were widely different from the smart and unsubstantial rows and crescents of a flourishing watering-place, being, for the most part, old, dingy, and irregular, a miserable mixture of shabby shops, noisy hotels, and lodging-houses fitted up in Queen Anne's days.

Our residence might lay claim to even an earlier date. It was a very large long-fronted stone mansion, terminated at either end by massive iron gates, the pillars to which were surmounted with spread eagles (the crest, probably, of the first possessor), and balanced by an old-fashioned stone porch with seats in the centre of the house, which, as well as the whole frontage, was covered with the luxuriant myrtles, passion-flowers, white jessamine, and moss-roses, peculiar to the mild climate of our southern coast. The house itself, infinitely too large for our family, was built round a quadrangle, or interior court, the best apartment looking on a small lawn surrounded by trees and shrubs (the arbutus especially, I remember, was in splendid profusion),

and terminated by a large conservatory and a filbert walk.

Behind this walk was a series of hanging gardens parted by hedges of myrtles and roses, and descending down a sharp declivity, planted with strawberries ', (always so beautiful and so fragrant, whether in the leaf, the flower, or the fruit,) to a shallow babbling brook, on the other side of which was a meadow richly dotted with timber trees, and edged at the extremity by a double row of limes, which completely shut out all sight or sound of the suburban cottages on the other side of the enclosure. One of these gardens, that which I was permitted to call mine, had underneath the high

¹ The mixture of strawberry-beds, and indeed of fruit in general, adds much to the charm of a flower-garden. One of the prettiest that I know is the lady's garden at Maiden Erleigh, originally a large kitchen garden enclosed by high walls, but sloping to the south, and so well adapted to flowers, that the vegetables have been banished, whilst the fruit-trees and berry bushes have been suffered to retain their station, giving just the variety of light and darkness, sun and shade, which the plants require, and adding their own beauties of bright blossom and pendant fruit to the tulips and dahlias. I do not know any thing prettier, than to see the lovely daughters of that hospitable house plucking baskets of grapes, or nosegays of geraniums, for some favoured guest.

steep bank which divided it from the lawn, a rudely built but very tasteful grotto, formed of portions of rock, shells, ores, and aquatic plants, at the innermost end of which gushed a natural spring, never overflowing its small sandy basin, and yet always full; there doubtless it is still. Years many and long have passed since I have sat beside that tiny fountain, and yet never have I forgotten the intense pleasure which I derived from watching its clear and crystal wave:

"Long may the spring,
Quietly as a sleeping infant's breath,
Send up cold waters to the sojourner
With soft and even pulse! nor ever cease
You tiny cone of sand its soundless dance,
Which at the bottom, like a fairy's page,
As merry and no taller, dances still,
Nor wrinkles the smooth surface of the fount,
Where twilight is and coolness: here is moss,
A soft seat, and a deep and ample shade."

Coleridge.

Next to my delight in that grotto, was my love for a chamber miscalled my play-room, opening out of my nursery, from which it descended by a short flight of stairs, with an old gothic balustrade, which, together with an arched ceiling, high and narrow pointed windows

far above my reach, and the carved oak pannelling which covered the walls, gave an air of gloom and solemnity to the apartment. Here I had a great collection of ores, spars, shells, and petrifactions, the toys which at that time I loved best, and in arranging them, and poring over the books of our large and rich English library, the hours of my lonely and uncompanioned childhood were principally spent. Bishop Percy's collection of old ballads was, I think, the book that I read most, and if I have been and am still dreamy, meditative, visionary, and melancholy, it is, I verily believe, to the influence of that one year passed in a stately and gloomy seclusion, pursuing, amidst the grandeur of nature, a course of reading only calculated to feed the romance of a shy and concentrated character, that I owe a turn of mind so ill fitted to meet the demands of a stirring and busy world. Certainly I would not so rear a child.

This influence of local situation on a girl so young was, however, undreamt of by my parents. A person of good character, a sort of English Bonne half-servant, and half-governess, had the nominal charge of me, and was well content with my quietness and docility; my dear mother had three or four young relations, misses in their teens, staying with her during nearly the whole time, and was sufficiently occupied in playing the chaperon to the dull gaieties of the place, taking them to the half-empty rooms, the prim parties, and the formal

balls which the season might afford. A tedious duty was that, Heaven knows! Of course, I was too young to be admitted to the society, such as it was; but I had even then a glimmering perception of its being any thing but exhilirating-so few persons and so many pretensions—such a jostling of poor gentility with vulgar riches-such an overflow of ladies, and such a paucity of men. The leader of the genteel party was a dowager countess, almost past every thing but carpet-work and quadrille; a tall, pale, shadowy figure, with as few words as a well-accomplished parrot, and I suppose about the same quantity of idea. Her rival was the rich wife of a Bristol merchant, a tun of a woman, abounding in loud vulgar talk, and full of coarse hospitality, and noisy good humour. I rather think that she was the more popular of the two, though, according to my mind, by far the greater evil. One might very fairly forget the lady countess, even though the carpet-work and its huge machine of a frame were in the room; -but I defy you to escape from the sight or sound of madame, even though half a street were between ye. I am not sure whether my aristocratical predilections may not date from that period, together with my other romantic That female Jack Cade, Mrs. Twoshoes, was enough to cure any mortal of jacobinism, as the phrase went then. Her cause could not be a good one. That fact came upon us with the certainty of a mathematical

demonstration. My lady might not be right; but she must be wrong. That truth was past dispute.

Of the society, however, such as it was, I, of course, know little. I did not even accompany my mother in her morning visits. My walks were confined to rambles on the shore with my maid, or still more to my delight. with my dear father, the recollection of whose fond indulgence is connected with every pleasure of my childhood. The town lay in the centre of a natural bay, and on the one side the sands went sweeping under cliffs of a tremendous height and blackness, down which a rapid stream came pouring its slender waters like a thread of silver, to an abrupt headland, beyond which the cliff had in some former century given way, and where masses of earth, huge trees, and even an old mossy orchard, were mingled in most romantic confusion with huge rocks, blackened by exposure, and the gardens, barns, and other buildings of a small farm-house.

On the opposite side of the bay, the coast road, after passing the pier and the harbour, wound under rocks of which large fragments strewed the shore, and which every moment seemed threatening to fall 1, to a pretty village about a mile and a half from the town. This



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The part of which the danger seemed most imminent was the churchyard, perhaps, one of the most finely situated in England, in spite of its being so perilously undermined.

was our most common walk. My father, a dabbler in science, with his hammer and basket, breaking off fragments of rock to search for the curious spars and still more singular fossil remains for which the spot is famous, I picking up shells and sea-weeds, watching the fishermen as they landed their unhappy hauls, or those semi-aquatic animals, the men-like bathing women, performing their similar though opposite functions, as they immersed the scarcely less unfortunate inmates of their machines in the briny element. What enjoyment it was to feel the pleasant sea-breeze, and see the sun dancing on the waters, and wander as free as the seabird over my head beneath those beetling cliffs! Now for a moment losing sight of the dear papa, and now rejoining him with some delicate shell, or brightlycoloured sea-weed, or imperfect cornua ammonis, inquiring into the success of his graver labours, and comparing our discoveries and our treasures. What pleasure, too, to rest at the well-known cottage, the general termination of our walk, where old Simon, the curiosity-monger, picked up a mongrel sort of livelihood, by selling fossils and petrifactions to one class of visitors, and cakes, and fruit, and cream, to another. His scientific bargains were not without suspicion of a little cheatery, as my companion used, laughingly, to tell him, though amused by the jargon of the old man, and the composure with which he bore the detection of any small roguery, he

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suffered himself to be imposed upon in a small way in his own person; but the fruit and curds were honest as I can well avouch: and the legends of petrified seamonsters, with which they were seasoned, bones of the mammoth, and skeletons of the sea-serpent, have always been amongst the pleasantest of my sea-side recollections.

# CHRISTMAS AMUSEMENTS.

(No. VI.)

The beautiful reading of Mr. Mortimer, that most delightful and rarest of all accomplishments, which had lent a merit, not their own, even to such trifles as album rhymes, was now put into nightly requisition on higher and worthier subjects. The old plays, which were the main object of pursuit to himself and Mr. Wilkins, formed the best possible collection from which to furnish forth his evening lectures, whilst his extreme delicacy of mind and of taste, rendered him the very man to make of his reading an extempore family library, culling the beauties and avoiding the faults of the great dramatists who, cast upon a coarser age, unhappily mingled the alloy of that grosser time with their own pure and indestructible metal. Accordingly, he read to us many of the finer parts of those delicious poets who fol-

lowed in the train of Shakspeare, the mightiest of all, much as the stars in a brilliant night succeed to the still more glorious sun. The best scenes-or, in many - instances, merely single speeches of Beaumont and Fletcher, Massinger, Forde, Decker, Webster, and Chapman, came "mended from his tongue;" even Mr. Wilkins kept awake to listen to his own favourite passages, aided by such declamation, and his gentle lady feeling the charm of the voice, though scarcely it may be presumed comprehending the poetry, laid down her Tom and Sophia, both pertatting and listened too. sons of considerable talent and feeling, were delighted, and Annie was in raptures. She implored him to read to her the scene of The Bird in the Cage, to which her father had compared her bad acting, and declared to every body that her father might say what he would of his idol John Kemble, or her brother Tom of his friend Mr. Cathcart, but she was quite sure that Mr. Mortimer was a greater actor than either of them.

So passed the evenings. In the morning my fellowvisitor was a less constant companion of the studies of his host, than had been the case on his first arrival. Then from ten to six he was pretty sure to be found in the library. Now he was frequently a truant from the reading-desk, or the writing-table, and was more likely to be found on a wet day in the great hall, playing at battledore and shuttlecock with Annie, or even teaching her to handle a queue in the billiard-room, whilst, if the weather was fine, he was scampering on foot over the park, or on horseback over the country, with the same fair companion, and with none other. In short, it required no great stretch of observation to discover that our grave scholar, our shy avoider of the sex, our determined old bachelor was, and, probably, for the first time in his life, in love, and that the object was a simple little lass young enough for his daughter. Whether he himself were equally enlightened as to the state of his own affections, seemed to me doubtful. A very few days settled the question.

A nephew of Mr. Wilkins's, a fine lad of eighteen, who had just entered the army, came to spend a few days at Haddonleigh, on his way to country quarters, partly, as it seemed, to see his cousins, and partly to display his new regimentals, of which he was as proud as a child of a new doll. Annie and he had, it seemed, been play-fellows of old, and fell very naturally into their former habits of familiarity, he putting her in mind that she used to be called his little wife, she turning him round and round to admire the exquisite tightness of his scarlet coat, and declaring that she would marry no man that was laced and braced after that fashion; that she had no notion of a husband who had not room in his clothes to play at battledore and shuttlecock, which she was morally certain her cousin Walter could not,

screwed up as he was. There was nothing very astounding to a lover's feelings, one should think in such a declaration as this; yet within two hours of cousin Walter's arrival, did Mr. Mortimer announce his own immediate departure, leaving the room as he spoke, to give orders to his servant, and make his intentions known to his host, who was, as usual, engaged in the library.

Two hours after, I met him in the gallery, and could not resist the impulse of speaking to him:

- "So you are really going, Mr. Mortimer? Is not the resolution sudden?"
  - "I feared that it would appear so."
- "We shall miss our evening lectures; and Mr. Wilkins will be sadly at a loss in his morning studies;—and poor Annie, what will she do for her play-fellow?"
- "Has not she her old play-fellow, her cousin Walter? Suitable in age, in gaiety, in appearance, he who calls her his little wife? I have been on the brink of folly as you, I fear, have seen; and ought to thank this boy's arrival for preventing me from plunging in. I leave her to a younger suitor."
- "I thought so. But if you will trust a cool observer, this young man is as little likely to prove a suitor to Annie, as Annie to listen to him if he were. If he think of any thing except his regimentals (which is doubtful) it will be of some woman turned of twenty. Young

boys seldom affect young girls. And she—oh! if you could but see how she is crying her little heart out;—and what a dear warm heart it is!"

"Oh! beware in mercy not to give me false hopes;—know not what you do. It cannot be that one so unsightly, so unfashioned, a mere awkward scholar, and, comparatively speaking, so old, can have made any impression on the fancy of this sweetest and loveliest creature, beaming with youth, and life, and gaiety. It cannot be."

"Not on her fancy, I grant you; but on her heart. Will not that please you as well? You are still incredulous, Mr. Mortimer—but I think I know the mind of both. Only remain at Haddonleigh this evening, (I'll find you an excuse), and suffer me to try a little experiment. If it do not succeed, you can take yourself off to-morrow morning. If it do, I must leave it to your own ingenuity to devise a reason for your farther stay."

He consented accordingly; and every body was so glad to detain him, though only for a few hours longer, that no one examined very scrupulously into the cause of his delay. But the evening passed wearily along, as the evenings before a separation are wont to do, and the whole company seemed relieved when I produced a roll of paper, declaring that to complete the title of Haddonleigh to figure as the scene of a romance, I had just taken that manuscript from the drawer of an old piece

of furniture, called a commode. That I knew from my own experience, that dramas were sometimes found in old mansions, having once before met with such an adventure <sup>1</sup>, and that, as Mr. Mortimer seemed to have a cold, I should beg my friend Tom to read it to us. Adding, that I feared Mr. Wilkins would detect both the writing and the composition to be modern, though unluckily there were no Greek ee's.

And Tom laughed and began to read the little dramatic scene that follows. Annie at first hearing it listlessly, until a word or two forced her blushing and eager attention, and Mr. Mortimer entirely engrossed by watching her.

## THE TWO KINSMEN.

### A DRAMATIC SCENE.

PERSONS-Mrs. Conway. Helen Conway, her Niece.

Scene—An elegant Lady's Sitting room in a great Country House.

#### MRS. CONWAY. HELEN.

Mrs. Conway. Why art thou silent, fairest niece?

Three long

Eventful weeks have past since last we met;

1 See note.

Yet, save a sad sweet welcome, thou hast spoken No word to me, my Helen. Art thou musing On Hubert Lee?

Helen. Why should I muse on him?

Mrs. Conway. Nay, there hath been a moment when that question

Had caused thee blush, and start, and smile, and glow With such a beauty as the summer sun Lends to the summer flower—the rosy tint Of love.

Helen. If such an hour there were, forget it,
As I have done, good aunt. Hast thou not learnt
That I'm a beggar? The long law-suit, waged
Betwixt my guardians and Lord Delamere,
Is given against me: I, that was accounted
The wealthiest heiress of the land, am now
Its poorest orphan—homeless, friendless!

Mrs. Conway. Helen,

Have I no home? And is not my home thine?

Are not my daughters sisters to thee, Helen,

And I thy mother? Sweetest, were I rich,

Rich should'st thou be. No thanks, no tears, my Helen!

Talk we of Hubert Lee?—ye were betroth'd:

What change can this chance work?

Helen. Have I not said

That I am poor?

Mrs. Conway. But he hath competence,
And will inherit wealth. I've seen his rich
And generous kinsman, good Sir Everard,
Thy kindest neighbour, and thy truest friend;
And he commands me say, "Not for her lands,
But for herself, he held his cousin blest
In winning Helen Conway; but since lands
So long held her's, and this her pleasant home
From earliest childhood, needs must be most dear
To Helen's heart, he hath already purchased
Park, mansion, and demesne—a wedding offering
To the young bride: so that when Helen gives
Her own fair hand to Hubert Lee, she gives, too,
Her own fair heritage."

Helen. O, matchless friend!
Knows Hubert aught of this?
Mrs. Conway. Not yet.

Helen. I deemed so.

Say to Sir Everard, that I as dearly, As truly thank him, as if I, in sooth, Were like to wed his heir.

Mrs. Connay. And art thou not? Helen. Never!

Mrs. Conway. Some lovers' quarrel!

Helen. No. Good aunt.

I well remember now that thou could'st ne'er

Abide my favour'd suitor, deeming him A slight and selfish trifler: such he proves. Mrs. Conway. Ha! say'st thou so? Helen. A fortnight past, he came, After a five days' absence, and was usher'd, As usual, straight to me. Sad looks he wore, And in a grave and measur'd tone inquir'd If I had lost my all?—if hope were none To try the cause again, and so reverse The harsh decree? I answered, none. And then, Shaking his head, and striving for a look Of solemn wisdom, after decent pause, My prudent wooer spake of poverty, And of the duty all men owed their name And kindred, not to wed without good hope Of fair sufficiency; and then he sighed: " If he were rich," he said, "but he was poor-Wretchedly poor!" And then he cried, "Alas!" And glanc'd at parting; seem'd to weep, and talk'd Of broken hearts; and finally withdrew In a well-acted passion of deep sorrow.

Mrs. Conway. Hast seen him since?

Helen. I walk'd down yester eve

To the dear rectory, to say—Farewell!

And there, within the lilac bower, I saw

My sad heart-broken swain in dalliance gay

With the rich widow, Lady Varney.

Mrs. Conway. Aye?

Helen. Her or her jointure; 'tis
A shrewd doubt whether. As I deem, they came
To buy the license, for was never pair
Made such an ostentation of their love.
Enough of such a waverer! Trust me, aunt,
At loss of my whole fortune I account me
A happy woman, to have 'scap'd this sordid
And mercenary suitor. Lady Varney
Hath drawn the worser lot; I pity her,
Even from my inmost heart.

Mrs. Conway. And I believe thee,
Truly, my Helen; all the readier believe,
That there is in thy gentle scorn no token
Of envy, grief, or anger; that thy voice
Is calm as be thy words; thy cheek unflush'd;
Thy lip untremulous; thine eyes undimn'd
By womanish tears. Thou must have striven well,
So soon to master love.

Helen. Nay, nay, good aunt,
'Twas liking, never love: a light and gay,
And girlish fancy, wak'd by a trim shape,
A comely face, a gallant port, and fed
By flatt'ries delicate and feignings fair.
Love! O no, no! though, as his wife, bound to him
By sacred duties and thrice-holy vows,

I should have lov'd him well, and never, surely,
In poverty could have forsaken him,
Yet, being left, I felt an instant joy
That I was free; for Hubert—frank and gay,
And brilliant though he seem'd—lack'd the fine taste,
The fertile fancy, the high-reaching thought,
That make Sir Everard's eloquent speech a feast
To mind and heart. Be sure thou thank him, madam,
For his unparagon'd kindness: make as light
As may be of this tale; I would not fling
Dissension 'twixt two kinsmen, nor estrange
The elder from his heir.

Mrs. Conway. Be certain, Helen, That Hubert Lee will never now be heir To his kind cousin.

Helen. Is he not his next Of kin?

Mrs. Conway. I grant ye.

Helen. Nam'd in th' entail?

Mrs. Conway. I grant ye that, too;

But if Sir Everard wed-

Helen. Wed!

Mrs. Convay. Why, how old

Dost thou think him, Helen?

Helen. Five-and-forty.

Mrs. Conway. 'Tis

The outside of his age: full many a man Hath been an older bridegroom.

Helen. But Sir Everard!

Mrs. Conway. Well, and Sir Everard! Is he not dear maiden,

Graceful and gracious, mild and generous, kind, And good, and wise; one that will make his home The very shrine of virtuous happiness? Thrice blest will his wife be.

Helen. But surely, madam,

He never means to wed. He said so, frankly,

When Hubert first address'd me; then the purchase

Of these broad lands for me and his young heir:

He'll never wed.

Mrs. Conway. Make not too certain, Helen.

Sit here beside me; I have that to tell

Will work some wonder in thy little brain:

Listen. Sir Everard, all his life, hath been

An over-eager student: from a boy,

His very soul was in his books. At Eton,

At Oxford, in gay France, or graver Spain,

Or classic Italy, duly as here

In his paternal halls, his lamp hath burnt

At midnight, and hath paled before the ray

Of the bright sun-dawn, and hath seen him still

With Æschylus' or Homer's boldest page,

Or Plato's golden dream, or Pindar's lay, Disclos'd before his sleepless eyes. He liv'd In those immortal men—in their rich tongue Revell'd: it was a passion and a joy-The blameless vision of his youth ;-but youth Wither'd before it. He grew lean and wan. As one new-risen from a sick-bed, and bent As by decrepit age, and silver hairs Untimely blended with the manly brown; Whilst shy reserve and learn'd abstraction crept Over his fluent speech, and long disuse Rusted the courtly ease which ladies love. So that, when waking from his dream, he walk'd Into the stirring world, he found himself Unlike his fellows, sport of vain coquettes, Jest of light coxcombs; and in shame and scorn Strangely commingled, stole back to his books, Abjuring man and woman.

Helen. Surely, madam,
You do him less than justice?
Mrs. Conway. So he liv'd
Retir'd, scatt'ring his bounty through the land,
But chary of his presence, till one charm
Lur'd back the hermit to the world.

Helen. And what Might that charm be?

Mrs. Conway. A child, a lovely child! She was the niece of one his mother lov'd, And often at the castle. 'Twas an heiress—Alas, poor thing, an orphan! and their lands Join'd.

Helen. And was she the charm ?—she! that poor child!

That silly ignorant child!

Mrs. Conway. That very child.

Gentle and playful was she as a fawn,
And innocent and loving, and most fair,
And most unconscious of her power; and he
Was all unconscious too, till the fair child
Grew into fairer woman: then he knew
That the strange passion that so thrill'd his heart—
The pleasure mix'd with pain—was love.

Helen. Alas!

Why said he not-

Mrs. Conway. Why, she was gay as fair,
And young; and he—Helen, it is the curse
Of true love, that it paints in tints of light,
Hues glitt'ring as the rainbow, the beloved,
And views itself all shadow;—he misdoubted
His age, his form, his gravity, unfit
To match with youthful beauty. Still he loved.
And from her innocent kindness he, perchance,

Had gather'd hope and courage; when his mother Droop'd in this northern climate, and he bore her To Lisbon, where she died.

Helen. Alas!

Mrs. Conway. She died,

After long suffering; and when Sir Everard At length won home—

Helen. Alas!

Mrs. Conway. He found the maid
Betroth'd to his next kinsman; and forgetting
All, save her happiness, proclaim'd at once
Him whom she lov'd his heir. Need I to tell
The rest, my Helen?—that the maid became
Poor, and her mercenary suitor left her
For a rich widow. Thou art silent, sweet,
And surely musing now. Is it of Hubert,
Or Everard?

Helen. And he lov'd the poor, poor Helen!
He—ever wisest, kindest, best—he lov'd her!
And she for that light youth—when such a man
As Everard lov'd her!

Mrs. Conway. And still loves!

Helen. To vex him-

To be a grief to him!

Mrs. Convay. From this day forth
Thou'lt be his joy, fair niece. Blest was the hour

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That made thee poor, and for you sordid wooer, Gave thee his noble kinsman!

"Well, Annie, what do you think of Helen's lovers?" asked her brother, who had marked her absorbed, and blushing, and almost tearful attention, and the unconscious glance with which she had, as it were, seemed to appropriate the character of Sir Everard to Mr. Mortimer. "What do you think of Helen's destiny? I don't ask how you like the scene, because we can pretty well guess at the authoress, and it would be hardly fair; but don't you think her heroine made a good exchange?"

And what Annie answered I do not remember; nor can I describe how she looked. But the effect was as decisive as that of the play in Hamlet. Mr. Mortimer did not go away the next morning; and four months afterwards, when her two sisters married and sent me gloves and cake, there came a third packet from dear Annie, also a thrice happy bride.

Note.—It once befel me to make in the proper scene for such an adventure, an old mansion in Northumberland, a discovery of the sort alluded to. When a very young damsel, somewhere between sixteen and seven-

teen, I accompanied my father on a long visit to his relations in the north of England. His head-quarters were at Kirkley, the seat of the late Mr. Ogle, a bachelor of his own age, his near kinsman, and very intimate friend; and I, although a great part of my time was spent amongst cousins of various degrees of remoteness (for in Northumberland, as over the border, one counts kindred to the fortieth remove-a sort of English clanship), was yet, not unfrequently, for a few days at Kirkley, and when there was installed by the gallantry of the owner as the youthful mistress of the mansion. A young lady, also a near connexion and name-sake, was provided to bear me company, but I presided at the head of the table, ordered dinner, received visitors, and officiated in all points as lady of the house. How well I remember the mingled feelings of embarrassment and gratification with which I assumed my new dignity!half delighted with the novel sense of importance, like the lass described by Wordsworth-"the girl of twelve, left one-day mistress of her mother's keys,"half sinking under shyness, and consciousness, and an anxious fear of not properly performing the duties of my office. I got on, however, exceedingly well. cousin Mary, several years older than myself, and far more accustomed to society and the world, was a most kind and excellent prompter; the blushes and bashfulness of sixteen find a ready pardon from most people;

and in my case, the old friends and connexions of the family would have forgiven much heavier sins to my father's daughter. Nothing could be more prosperous than my management. In domestic affairs I, undoubtedly, owed my success to putting myself entirely into the hands of the old upper servants, and reigning under the discreetest of housekeepers, and the most solemn of butlers. A king would as soon have thought of interfering with a leading measure of his prime minister, as I of interfering with Mr. Ambrose's arrangements of argands and wax-lights, or Mrs. Donkin's bills of fare: I even submitted the direction and distance of my drives to the old coachman; and they in return for my docility, not only cried me up as one of the cleverest and most thoughtful young ladies that ever entered a house, but did every thing in their power, by providing all that was likely to be wanted, to smooth my way, and make my task of directress easy and comfortable.

One evening, however, when two or three sportsmen had been dining at the house—fox-hunters in their scarlet coats, who happening to find themselves near Kirkley at the end of the chase, had adjourned thither, instead of returning to their several houses, and claimed the privilege of their dishabille as an excuse for adjourning to the library instead of joining the ladies in the drawing-room, Mr. Ambrose entered suddenly in great distress, to fetch some picquet cards.—"There should

be such things," he said, "somewhere; but they were so seldom wanted, and his master passed so very small a part of the year at his own place, that during the short time that he was there all matters seemed in confusion. He should not wonder if none were to be found."

My cousin and I joined in the pursuit with great zeal, ransacking card-boxes, pulling out drawers, and flinging open cabinets with indefatigable perseverance, until at last two new packs were discovered oddly ensconced in a back-gammon table, when despatching Mr. Ambrose to the gentlemen with the long-soughtfor treasure, we addressed ourselves to the task of restoring some order amongst the moveables, which our hasty search had so grievously discomposed. this process, I found it impossible to shut one of the drawers of a sofa table; and putting in my hand to discover and remove the impediment, I brought out a large roll of paper, the envelope of which had given way, and had effectually prevented the drawer from closing. The roll opened entirely as I laid it on the table, and presented to my astonished and delighted eyes a manuscript play.

Whether, according to the laws of honour, I ought to have read an anonymous and unprinted piece, not intended for my inspection, I really cannot tell. On better information I believe not; and certainly, at present to peruse surreptitiously the MS. work of an unknown

writer would be about the last thing that would enter my imagination. Too many of such things come into one's hands in the common course of events, under the form of duties, to leave one much appetite for the task. But this was the first opportunity of the sort that had ever befallen me, and to a romantic and enthusiastic girl not yet seventeen, and passionately devoted to literature and the drama, the discovery of a MS. play in an old mansion in a remote northern county, at ten o'clock of a November night, must, under all circumstances, have been a gratification the most exciting, and the most delightful.

Influenced by these feelings, I opened and read the play. It was a drama in three acts, entitled Kruitzner, and taken from the Canterbury Tale of the same name, which has since given rise to the most effective of Lord Byron's Tragedies, "Werner," which owes so much to the fine literary taste, and the splendid acting of Mr. Macready, and which has also been dramatized by the authoress herself, under the title of "The Three Strangers."

This story, always, and in every shape, so striking and so interesting,—and it is one of the few stories of the world which comes upon the reader as wholly original—was never more skilfully or powerfully developed than in the instance of which I speak: the play was written in bold and eloquent prose, a style of composi-

tion which, though seldom resorted to for that purpose, is admirably adapted to the serious drama—witness the character of Penruddock, and some few of Holcroft's happier scenes; and in many parts the very words of the tale had been retained, especially as far as regarded the fine part of Josephine, which preserved in the play as in the story its high predominance of purity and intellect, (in Werner, if I remember right, it is merely a sketch), and must, I think, have been intended for Mrs. Siddons.

In short, I was in raptures with my discovery, which after reading it aloud to my cousin, who echoed my praises, I went over again by myself, before going to bed; and although it probably owed something of its charm to the being a discovery, as "every child loves the violet of his own finding best," yet even now, on sober recollection, I incline to think that I did not greatly overrate the merit of the play. Very young persons, if they have any pretensions to refinement and literature, are far more apt to err on the side of fastidiousness, than on that of over-estimation. The power of admiring whatever is deserving of admiration, the nice and quick perception of the beautiful and the true, is one of the highest and noblest of our faculties, born of taste, and knowledge, and wisdom,-or rather it is taste, and wisdom, and knowledge, in one rare and great combination. Young people are seldom too richly endowed with that quality. On the contrary, they are in general rash and intolerant critics, keen in detecting faults, or what to their inexperience seems such, and petulant and hasty in proclaiming their ill opinion. The piece that, unrecommended by a great name, or by the praise of any one to whom they look up, carries them away, must be striking. Besides which, I had individually been a devoted reader of Shakspeare, Milton, and the early English poets; my notions of dramatic excellence were founded upon them. Even whilst delighting to see John Kemble in Rolla, The Stranger, and the series of plays from Kotzebue, which had just passed out of fashion, I had, child as I was, felt their meretriciousness and their falseness. My admiration was by no means easily won; and I feel assured from the recollection of my own enthusiasm, that "Kruitzner" must have possessed considerable merit.

The next morning at breakfast, I mentioned to my kind host the treasure that I had discovered, inquiring of him if he knew the author, or could guess how the MS. had found its way into the drawer of a sofa table in his drawing-room. To the first question he answered decidedly in the negative; he had no knowledge, nor could form any guess as to the author; but it had, most probably, been brought thither by Mr. Sheridan (whose last wife was his sister), and who had spent some weeks at Kirkley the preceding summer. It was just in Sheri-

dan's way, he added, to bring down a promising or a highly recommended play with the intention of looking it over, and then to leave it unread and unopened.

Of course, I urged Mr. Ogle most strongly to write to Mr. Sheridan, or his sister, on the subject; and he promised to comply with my request. Probably he did so, for he was a just and honourable, though a very indolent man; but although I frequently inquired as to the fate of the play, I never heard that any good was produced by his application. Little, indeed, was to be expected. Sheridan, ruined in fortune, and sinking in health, had ceased to have any power in the theatre. Our kind host himself died shortly after my visit; and another relation of our's (the lady Charles Aynsley), to whom the unlucky MS. had been lent by Mr. Ogle. died also within a brief period. Every one interested in that unfortunate drama passed away excepting myself, and I have never been able to recover it, or to trace its origin or its destiny. It came upon me and disappeared like a dream.

Frequently, however, in the course of my own theatrical career, its anxieties and its disappointments, have I thought with intense sympathy of the unknown author of Kruitzner, of his fruitless expectations, his wearying suspense, his unrewarded toil. Such a circumstance could only have occurred to Mr. Sheridan; it was an extreme case, characteristic of and peculiar to him, and

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most strikingly different from the prompt and punctual attention which, so far as my experience goes, I have always received from every manager with whom I have had to do; but that it should have occurred, if only once, to a production of any merit is grievous to think of, a signal instance of the oppressions of the world, and of the calamities which beset dramatic genius.

THE END.



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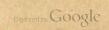
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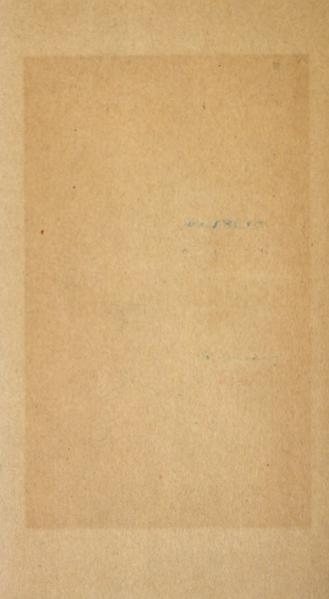
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